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SCENES AND SPORTS

IN

FOREIGN LANDS.

ILLUSTRATED WITH

A SERIES OF DRAWINGS TAKEN FROM NATURE.

X.i.18

MAJOR [illegible] NAPIER,

[illegible] REGIMENT.

85051

"Seriously, that same [illegible] a mere [illegible] amusement, only fit for women in the army, and royal dukes, and [illegible] of great [illegible] wanting in gallantry, but sometimes harassing one's arms, [illegible] a good [illegible] with strong [illegible] to the mercy of bad shots [illegible] enjoyed by the probationary [illegible] called [illegible] Pelham.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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1840.

85054

TO

HIS BEST AND EARLIEST FRIEND,

TO THE FRIEND OF THE BRITISH SEAMAN,

AND THE PRIDE OF HIS PROFESSION,

TO

"OLD" CHARLEY NAPIER, C.B.

COUNT CAPE ST. VINCENT, ETC. ETC.

Is Dedicated,

THIS FIRST PRODUCTION

FROM THE PEN OF HIS ATTACHED

AND GRATEFUL ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE following pages, a portion of which appeared originally in the "Old Sporting Magazine," record some of the incidents which befel the Author and his companions in arms in his and their younger days, during a long residence in "foreign lands," whither he had been led by the duties of his profession. Written amid the din of arms, the bustle of a camp, the uproar of a barrack-room, or the confusion of a troop-ship, these sketches of adventure abroad can prefer little claim either to scholarship, elegance of language, or brilliancy of style.

Should the public, however, be dis-

posed to look with indulgence on this first essay of the Author, his Sporting Muse, warmed by the sunshine of their approving smiles, may in her next flight take a bolder course. If this work be void of any other merit, it can at least lay claim to that of authenticity. The incidents related are those which actually befel the parties engaged therein, given in nearly the same language as the rough notes from whence they are taken.

The drawings are from sketches made on the spot. In the wild and adventurous expeditions herein recorded, the pencil and portfolio ranked in importance only second to the rifle and boar-spear. That the "pen" is not so familiar as the latter in the hands of the writer, and that he cannot direct the flow and expression of his thoughts with as much ease as the course of his charger, may be his misfortune, but not his fault.

Merchiston Hall, Hants,
Oct. 1st, 1840.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THE AUTHOR JOINS HIS REGIMENT IN INDIA—PROGRESS OF THE NEOPHYTE—A YOUNG "GRIFFIN"—WONDERS THAT BURST UPON HIM—THE FEATHERED TRIBE—THE ADJUTANT—EXTRAORDINARY ANECDOTES—TREES AND ANIMALS—TODDY—AN EASTERN NIGHT—NATIVE BARBER—HINDOO GIRL—SUMPTUOUS BREAKFAST—SPORTING PARTY—A DISAPPOINTMENT.

On first entering the army at an early age, I joined my regiment in India. A strong natural taste for the sports of the field was here brought to maturity, and steadily followed up in that "seventh heaven" of the sportsman.

It would be tedious to trace during its whole course the progress of the neophyte, in the "cunning of his craft," in that far land, from the moment when

having crossed the "surf,"* a green, beardless, and red-cheeked novice, he displays his budding propensity to imitate the mighty hunter of old, the great Nimrod, by knocking over long-tailed parroquets amongst the groves of tall cocoa-nut trees at Poonamallee, or stalking for grey Paddy birds amidst the swampy expanse of the surrounding rice fields, to that proud era of his sporting career when he beholds extended at his feet, pierced by his now unerring rifle, the kingly carcass of the royal tiger; or when, with foot firmly planted on the reeking body of the bristly savage, he exultingly withdraws from its bloody sheath the sharp head of his well-tried boar-spear.

Through all the different acts of these intervening stages did I pass during a long

* An expression equivalent to entering or leaving India, as a person is never *supposed* to venture across this tremendous barrier of the Coromandel coast, unless on such momentous occasions.

and Bedouin-like residence, principally amongst the jungles of the Deccan, a life endeared by the most pleasing associations; and if tried friends, boon companions, and a perpetual recurrence of spirit-stirring adventures, when accompanied by the enjoyment of health, and freedom from all cares, tend to promote happiness, then most undoubtedly did I enjoy that "*ne plus ultra*" of the day-dreams of the philosopher; for never, on the whole, could time have been more pleasantly spent.

Although I purpose not to tire the reader with the whole initiation into the mysteries of the chase, of a young griffin* on first landing in India, still I must put him *au fait* as to the first *début* of our youthful friend, in scenes and amongst objects so entirely new to him; and although he does not, like Hercules, start

* Until a man has been a year and a day in India, he retains the appellation of "griffin," equivalent to greenhorn.

from his cradle and throttle a boa constrictor or cobra capello, yet in due imitation of that worthy of old, I will in time describe " as how" he gored the savage boar, bagged I know not how many brace of snipe and royal tigers before breakfast, had them all curried together, with a variety of other equally authentic and interesting narrations, in this our story of " Scenes and Sports in Foreign Lands."

Nature, which within the tropics is so luxuriant and prolific in the vegetable kingdom, is no less bountiful and lavish in the animal one; and the first things which strike the uninitiated European, on putting his foot on the sunny shores of India, are the numbers and familiarity of the animals unreclaimed, and free from the sway of man.

The young officer marching his detachment to its first station, Poonamallee, has not left the gates of Fort St. George ere he is astonished at seeing crows (in his

own land that most wary of the feathered tribe) fearlessly and gravely pacing along the verandahs, almost under the feet of the soldiers; whilst numerous large kites hovering about on the wing, and wide awake to everything going forward, will occasionally carry their boldness so far as to sweep past the cook boys carrying in large wicker baskets the meat destined for the use of the soldiers, and should a detached and portable morsel meet their glance, it is instantaneously carried aloft in their serried claws. Besides the above crows and kites, numerous vultures are the usual visitors and scavengers of the barrack yard. These disgusting-looking birds are of two species, one of a dirty white, the other of a dark brown colour, the face divested of feathers, and of a most bilious-looking dark yellow hue.*

* These revolting and obscene birds sometimes gorge themselves to such a degree, that the author

In Fort William, to these gentry are added the "adjutant," who, from his greater bulk and capacity of stomach, is a still more efficient scavenger. I have often heard the *Qui-Hy's** relate curious anecdotes of this extraordinary bird, which appears to belong to the stork species. I remember C——d, who is an old Bengalee, vouching for the truth of the following:—"When I was a youngster," said he, "at my father's quarters in the Fort, I used to play the adjutants all manner of tricks; on one occasion, I remember getting a couple of large marrow bones, and, after fastening them both together, charging the cavities with gunpowder well rammed down, we applied a slow match,

has galloped up to a party feasting on the carcass of a bullock, and singling out one, ere he could soar out of reach, has, whilst skimming along the ground, driven the spear through his back.

* The Bengalees are so nick-named.

and threw them in this state into the midst of the adjutants which were stalking about in front of the barracks. A couple of them immediately pounced each on a bone, which was as soon swallowed, but the connecting string had on them the same effect which the leash has on two dogs wishing to go opposite ways. After a short tussle on *terra firma*, our Siamese twins betook themselves to the regions of air. In the meantime, their internal enemy, the slow match, had not been idle; scarcely had they soared to the height of a few dozen yards, when a tremendous explosion took place; the fragments of bone and a piece of singed rope fell to the ground, but the adjutants had disappeared in a cloud of smoke and feathers!"

Thunders of applause rang from every side of the mess table, which, from the manner in which they were expressed, ap-

peared to give the narrator little satisfaction, as impugning the veracity of his youthful exploit. "Go it again, 'Childe Harold;' another yarn!" re-echoed from all sides, when, as soon as the "Childe" could make himself heard, he said, "Well, gentlemen, you no doubt think it a very tough fellow; you shall now have one of a more soft and pathetic nature. Shortly after this occurrence, wishing to carry on my experiments with the adjutants, I chose my opportunity, and enticed a favourite little Blenheim lap-dog, belonging to one of the ladies of the family, into the square, in view of the adjutants. The latter appeared at first undecided what course to pursue, a real Blenheim being a delicacy to which they had probably not been accustomed. In the meantime, the poor little dog, nothing abashed at the attention bestowed upon him, was sauntering carelessly and fearlessly along, as he might,

under similar circumstances, have done at home, in a barn-yard well stocked with turkeys and fowls. At this moment, a huge adjutant gravely approached, and only moving the muscles of his countenance to yawn destruction on the unhappy little animal, took him quietly up, and the next moment he disappeared down the deep abyss opened to receive him. A piercing shriek warned me, in my place of concealment, that other eyes had beheld the metamorphosis of the dog into a 'swallow.' The next instant, a fair form, with dishevelled locks, was rushing across the square; but 'twas too late. The adjutant majestically soared aloft, and I beheld him alight on the highest pinnacle of a distant building, where, like 'patience on a monument smiling at grief,' he leisurely and complacently appeared to await the progress of digestion."

"Very soft, and very pathetic," said

the grim-looking Colonel W——, depositing his claret glass at the conclusion of the story, " and having been myself long at Fort William, I can vouch for the wonderful feats occasionally performed by these remarkable birds. I one day saw a live bandycoote* swallowed by one of them, but the next instant, to our surprise, he emerged from amidst the feathers of the bird's paunch, having evidently *eaten* himself out of limbo, and was taking himself off with all speed. The adjutant, however, was too quick for him; he was again bagged, and again made his escape, and the process was continued till the poor bandycoote died of sheer fatigue and exhaustion; was once more swallowed, and no longer burst the cerements of his living sepulchre."

This story was a poser: I however

* This is a very large species of rat, about the size of a guinea pig.

heard it suggested to a confirmed *bon vivant*, that a valuable hint might be from this taken, to enable the epicure to enjoy a frequent repetition of repasts, without any danger of suffering from surfeit or indigestion.

But I have been digressing, having left our young officer gaping at the crows and kites in the "bomb-proof" at Fort St. George, instead of keeping his eyes about him to see that none of his detachment of recruits were surreptitiously supplied with arrack. The consequence is, that before he reaches the gardens of Vepery, all the doolies which follow the detachment are occupied, not with sick and wounded, but with jolly patients reeling under the influence of a more "spiritual" deity of drink than that of the rosy god.

The poor young man is in a dreadful state of alarm lest he should be brought to a court-martial and broke for neglect

of duty; but, in all his trepidation, he cannot help stopping occasionally to watch the green parroquets amongst the waving branches of the graceful bamboo; the pretty little striped squirrels, as they nimbly bound up the banyan and tulip trees which border the road; or the brilliant and variegated plumage of the beautiful "neil-kánth," or blue-throated fly-catcher, pursuing its prey in rapidly revolving circles over his head.

All these, and a thousand other novelties fix his youthful attention; and, as he rides along on the broken-down old Arab, the elegant specimen of horse-flesh from Mr. Moore's livery stables, he, wishing his responsibility and detachment together at the devil, longs to be trying his new double-barrelled fowling-piece on the strange-looking creatures around him.

He leaves behind him the gardens, and emerges into the plains, when new ob-

jects crowd on his bewildered ken. Flocks of buffalos wallowing in the mud of a tank, natives passing and repassing, messengers on Hurcarah camels, graceful-looking Hindoo girls drawing water from the well, all make him fancy himself in the land of dreams, or reading the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. And then the scenery, so different from that of the frozen north! The tropical palm in all its varieties, the waving and voluptuous-looking cocoa-nut and date trees sleepily nodding their leaf-crowned heads, the smooth broad-leafed plantain, the tall and fan-like palmyra. But stay; what are those creatures swarming up its tall and naked trunk?—they are not monkeys—they surely cannot be men. Here, bugler, sound a halt! We will give five minutes to the stragglers to come up, whilst we rest under the tall and leafless stems of these skeleton trees.

But the figures going aloft towards their green and waving summits with such apparent facility *are* human beings: a hoop encircles their bodies and the trunk of the tree; their feet, fastened together with thongs of coir rope,* rest against the latter, whilst, with successive jerks of their bodies, and by the help of the hoop, they are rapidly carried upwards to their destination. When arrived at the leafy canopy above, the swarthy figure, naked as Adam, with the exception of two slight folds of linen, one enveloping the head, the other the loins, detaches a large vessel, which fastening behind him, he descends with as much celerity as he ascended. The recruits crowd around him, and he appears busily distributing, for a *consideration*, the contents of his earthen vessel. Still, something must be wrong; for behold

* A strong cordage made out of the fibres of the cocoa-nut tree.

the bronzed face of the old sergeant, the only one who has been in India before, kindles with wrath, and, after in vain attempting to put a stop to the "long pulls and strong pulls" which the young votaries of Mars are taking, he hastens to his equally juvenile commander with the following appeal, delivered in a rich Milesian dialect:—"Sure, your honour, 'tis toddy the boys are *afther dhrinking*, and if your honour does not put a stop to it, in two minutes the whole detachment, bugler and all, will be *dhrunk*."—"The devil! Well, sergeant, break all the crockeryware of those niggers; and tell the bugler to sound the 'fall-in,' whilst he is sober enough to do so." Our novice, in the meantime, who is a great admirer of Byron, recalls the following lines:—

"The palm, the loftiest dryad of the woods,
Within whose bosom infant Bacchus broods,
While eagles scarce build higher than the crest
Which shadows o'er the vineyard in her breast."

The thought flashes across his mind that he has been guilty of the imprudent act of halting his detachment in the very spot where they are the most exposed to the temptation of imbibing an intoxicating liquor,* and he hastens to repair his error by getting them under *weigh* as soon as possible, amidst the vociferations of the poor "tar-wallah," who is clamouring about his broken *chatties*.

* This liquor, which is called by Europeans toddy, and *tar* by the Natives, is extracted from the date, the cocoa-nut, and palmyra tree, by making an incision in the trunk of the former, and cutting off a leaf from the two latter trees, to the stump of which is applied at night an earthen vessel, which in the morning is found to contain two or three quarts of what, before fermentation takes place after sun-rise, is a sweet, cool, and refreshing beverage. But the heat of the sun soon converts it into an intoxicating liquor, in which state it is eagerly drunk by the soldier, and proves the source of as much crime as the potheen cabins in Ireland, or the wine shops of Gibraltar. Every *toddy* tree pays a regulated tax to government.

It is getting dusk; a large banyan tree marks that they have completed half their march; a "cornacopolly" is here awaiting them with refreshments, when a biscuit and glass of arrack are distributed to every man, and they again move off in the dark, for the short twilight of a tropical clime is speedily covered with the sable mantle of night. Our griffin is now more astounded than ever by sights and sounds totally novel; he goes along amidst a moving firmament of glittering stars, which, in the shape of fire-flies, dance around him in endless mazes; the vampire-like flying fox flits slowly and gloomily overhead, and his ears are assailed by a Babel of sounds proceeding from innumerable reptiles, insects, and creeping things, rejoicing in the mild dews of evening and the descent of burning Sol.

He at last arrives at the wished-for

haven of Poonamallee; his forces are duly installed in barracks; a hearty welcome and plentiful supper await him at the mess-house; and he concludes his *first* day in India nearly stunned and stupified by such a variety of novel sights, and scarcely aware whether he is in the land of fiction or reality.

Such were *my* impressions on the first day of my arrival; and now to try the readers' patience by pursuing a little further the infant career of the embryo sportsman, for "sporting," be it remembered, is the pith and marrow of our tale.

Next morning, he is awakened by a strange feeling about his face; he starts up, apprehensive of finding himself within the jaws of a boa-constrictor, when, to his surprise, he is already well-lathered, not with the mucus of the foul reptile,

but with a genuine composition from the soap-nut tree,* and under the hands of a native barber, so skilful as to be removing a beard where no symptoms of one ever existed before.

He frees himself as soon as possible from the man of soap-suds, when a dark, though pretty, female form, whose beautiful contour is still better developed by her graceful dress and attitude, is seen gliding past the ante-room door with a huge, but classically shaped earthen vessel on her head, shaded by raven locks and garlanded with fragrant white flowers. This is the "tawny-catch." Our poor young man has scarcely time to compare this dusky apparition to Neuha, "in growth a woman, though in years a child," ere he

* The berries of this beautiful tree, after undergoing a certain process, are made to answer all the purposes of common soap.

is forcibly seized by his self-constituted "dobash," stripped of his clothing forcibly, conducted into a bathing apartment, and nearly drowned by numerous chatties of delightfully cool water being poured over his head by an obsequious "maty."* He is then rubbed down like a horse, reconducted to his sleeping-room, dressed like a child by the aforesaid dobash, and finds a good breakfast and a jovial party awaiting him at the mess-room, that low, long building, overshadowed by tulip trees, on the opposite side of the green, and fifty yards from his own quarters.

* The dobash, or butler; the maty, or under servant; and the tawny-catch, or girl, whose business is to furnish the requisite supply of water, are the nucleus of a young officer's domestic establishment in India, where the number of servants is proverbially great; but, in this respect, on the Madras side, it is not carried to anything like the extent that it is in Bengal.

He here meets with many young men of his own age, all intent on enjoyment, and in the full excitement of novelty; a sumptuous breakfast is speedily devoured, followed by noyeau and other liqueurs, and they adjourn to the verandah to digest with a cheroot their morning repast, and settle the occupations, and amusements of the day. Some saunter over to the stables to admire their new purchases; others try their unpractised hands with the pellet bow* on the numerous honey birds† which, constantly flitting on the wing, are draining sweets from the pale yellow cups of the tulip-tree flowers; or direct their bullet

* The pellet bow is generally made of a piece of bamboo, kept bent by a double string, which is separated by a small piece of wood; on a tape connecting the two strings are placed small sun-dried clay balls, about the size of marbles, which are discharged with great force, and often wonderful accuracy, by the practised *pellet* archer.

† The *honey bird* is a species of the humming bird.

archery against some grave-looking old blood-sucker,* who, with red and swoln face and nodding head, is quietly basking on that old decayed branch.

A third party, amongst whom is our young neophyte, determined on a day's shooting, don their traps, get out their new doublebarrels, and, being duly equipped, sally forth. About Poonamallee is to be met capital snipe ground; but our griffs know not where to seek it; they blunder into the green rice-fields up to their knees in mud and water, blazing away at everything which comes across them, from a paddy bird† to a blue jay.

* The blood-sucker, a large kind of lizard, though perfectly harmless, is so called from his ferocious appearance and blood-stained countenance. He has some of the properties of the chamelion in changing his colour, and, like the latter, feeds on insects.

† A small species of stork, very common in the rice grounds.

See, one of the latter has been bagged by our friend; how he admires its beautiful plumage; it is carefully enveloped in brown paper, and consigned to the care of the attendant "maty," to serve as a subject for his brush and pencil! Listen to the exulting cry of yon tall youth with the flaxen hair; he has just successfully performed a brilliant military manœuvre, taken in flank a long row of sand-larks, philosophising on one of the serpentining ridges of the rice-fields, and is now dashing through pool and quagmire to secure his killed and wounded.

But, tired of this aquatic sport, they are determined to try the jungle: let us follow them to yonder clump of bâhr bushes, to which they appear to be attracted by the monotonous cooing of the numerous doves. It is a regular race between them to see who shall first reach

the favoured spot. The long-legged fellow in the flaxen locks has it all his own way, pulls up, brings the but to his shoulder, pulls the trigger, rushes in amidst the thorns, and bears out in triumph the poor dove,* whose soft yet brilliant eye discloses a thousand beauties ere it shuts for ever. Jealous of this successful shot, they hasten to yon green mangoe tope :† here is rare work for powder and shot ; minahs, king-crows, cherubims,‡ and mangoe birds, all indiscriminately swell the bag,

* Nearly every bush is occupied by its cooing tenants, who, in the heat of noon-day, to one encamped in the jungle, and languidly reposing in his tent, furnish a concert of sweet though monotonous sounds, peculiarly soothing to the mind and pleasing to the ear.

† A tope means a grove.

‡ A very small owl, which is often known by this name, because, during the day, whilst ensconced amidst the shady branches of a tree, they "continually do cry."

which at last can contain no more, and is brought back in triumph.

But only imagine the mortification of the party when, after mess, on the aforesaid bag being produced, instead of eliciting admiration, its contents only cause peals of laughter amongst the old hands, who are ready to drop off their chairs with merriment at the very idea of good powder and shot having been so wantonly wasted! Crest-fallen and dejected, our poor griffins hide as soon as possible their diminished heads, by sneaking off to their respective quarters. Here our young friend next morning finds himself laid up with a sharp attack of dysentery, and during a fortnight pays, with sundry applications of leeches and doses of calomel, for this his first day's experience in the sports of "foreign lands."

He however recovers, joins his regi-

ment, becomes by degrees seasoned to the climate; and now, tough as leather, and inured to every fatigue, witnesses and participates in, at different periods, the "scenes and sports" herein described.

SCENES AND SPORTS

IN

FOREIGN LANDS.

CHAPTER I.

ANTELOPE SHOOTING — THE NIGHT START — SPORTING PARTY IN THE DECCAN — GHORAWALLAHS, THE RUMNÁ — THE RUINS OF SURROO-NUGGUR — CHENNOO — HINTS ON SHOOTING ANTELOPES — THE CHASE — THE DEATH — BRINGING HOME THE DEER.

DUKE S.—"Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools."

SHAKSPEARE.

It was at ten o'clock on a fine moonlight night in the month of March that as convivial a party as ever carried cup to lip, or foot to stirrup, set out from the extensive cantonment of Secunderabad, in the Deccan, on the shooting expedition of which I am about to give an account.

"A strange hour for a start!" will, no doubt, exclaim the gentle or gouty fireside reader; but know, most sapient Sir, that India is not England, and that it is there a common circumstance thus to cheat bright Phœbus in his own domains, by stealing a march on him in the dark. Besides, we had had a good dinner, perhaps a little claret or Hodgson's own pale, qualified maybe by some of Gordon's best Madeira: but these points I cannot distinctly certify. All that I *can* venture to state on the subject is, that after settling all with a good glass of brandy-and-water to keep out the night air, we deemed ourselves sufficiently strong, both in body and *spirit*, to set at defiance any *sheitan** that might attempt to oppose our nocturnal progress.

Our party consisted of five, three of

* *Devil*, or *evil spirit*, supposed by the natives to inhabit dreary and desert places.

whom only could boast of being Sportsmen in the true sense of the word; men who would not hesitate to lose a night's rest in the jungle to have a shot at a porcupine or dumulgundy;* who would break their necks to secure the brush of a fox, or *bark* their faces, during a long day's fag in the hot winds, to bag a brace of florikin.

The remainder of the party was composed of a couple of *good fellows*—a term better understood in India than anywhere else, where a man is weighed, not by his rank and the length of his purse, but by the sterling good qualities which render him estimable. Such were our two non-sporting friends, men who would perhaps rather draw a cork than a trigger, or sing a jovial song than sing out "tally-ho!" These were certainly enormities which, in a sporting circle, might have gone hard against them; but with their many re-

* The large hyæna.

deeming qualities, they stemmed the current of popular opinion, and were always welcome at the camp of the "Sporting Club." Alas! they are no more, one having fallen a victim to climate, the other to matrimony! Peace be with their ashes!

Our steeds and *ghorawallahs*, who had long been waiting and wondering at our protracted delay, were at length relieved by our appearance, as I before said, at about 10 P.M.; we therefore mounted in high spirits, and proceeded to our destination, which, as the crow flies, did not exceed eight or nine miles.

As we are jogging along, I shall endeavour to give to the uninitiated griffin* the meaning of the above curiously-constructed word. It means neither more nor less than, *Anglicè*, "groom"—literally

* A person just arrived in India, or one who has *never* been there.

translated, "horsekeeper." In Bengal they give them the more euphonous Persian appellation of "saïs;" but the Bengalees are affected fellows, and if there be "anything in a name," I prefer the unassuming "*ghorawallah*," or even the less pretending Malabar sound of "*cuddrecarrah*." After the palankeen bearers, they are certainly the most useful hard-working servants in India; their *pluck* and *bottom* are truly wonderful, and, would, if recorded, shame many of the pedestrian feats in our own land. They consider it their duty to keep pace with their horse, wherever he goes, either in harness or the saddle; and to accomplish this they have frequently to undergo what would inevitably destroy any other men whose lives had not been passed in similar training. In the hottest weather, I have often driven out five miles and back with a very fast trotting horse, and the horsekeeper has al-

ways been at his head on my alighting. I have rode into cantonments fourteen miles from a shooting excursion at a good hard canter, and *Mr. Chennoo*, loaded with my fowling-piece, has not on my arrival been much behind me.

But to return to our party, whom we left, not quietly, but perhaps rather vociferously, wending their way towards the old ruins of *Surroo-Nuggur*, the very head quarters of antelopes, being in the midst of the "Rumna," or preserve of His Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, and which we intended to make our abode for the next few days. It may perhaps be necessary to state, that in order to obtain leave to shoot antelope in this part of the country, it was requisite to make an application to the minister, Chundoo Lall, through the British resident, when a *hookum*, or order, was given for permission to shoot so many days. But under this

system it was found that the slaughter was too great; and, latterly, the *permit* only signed the death-warrant of a couple of bucks, the *does* being held in too great contempt to waste a charge on.

But I am again digressing. We succeeded, by the help of the moon, in traversing without accident the arid and broken country extending between Secunderabad and the river Moussa, at this time of the year an insignificant stream, but even at this season difficult to cross, owing to its precipitous banks and rocky bed. After much trouble we discovered the ford, and half an hour more brought us to the cavern-like abode we had chosen in the Ruins. All was dark as Erebus: the servants whom we had sent on had despaired of seeing us that night, and had fallen asleep. They were, however, soon roused up, a light struck, and we were gladdened by the sight of a table ready spread, our

camp-couches in apple-pie order, our spare nags comfortably picketed at a short distance in the vaults, and the scene further *enlivened* by a score of niggers in the shape of *coolies* and *grass-cutters* snoring around, wrapped in their dark-coloured blankets. We shortly followed their example, and after giving strict injunctions to be called before day-break, were soon dreaming of the morrow's sport.

The dawn found us equipped for the chase; but before we had completed all our arrangements the sun had risen; and scrambling to the top of the old buildings, I eagerly looked out for the enemy, as at this hour it was not the first time I had knocked over a fine buck within a few hundred yards of the Ruins; but far as the eye could reach, nothing living appeared, and it rested on naught save the brown and already parched-up ground, broken here and there by dry water-courses and

ravines, dotted with abrupt rocks, and bounded in the distance by a chain of steep hills. The only thing to relieve the aching sight was the verdure of an occasional custard-apple bush, whose bright green shewed like a small oasis in the desert. At length we were on our steeds, and, each taking a separate path, put our faith in the good St. Hubert and a steady hand.

I made for the hills, intending to pursue my old system of destruction, of which there are several approved methods. The first is, to be enveloped in a cumlay,* and thus, under false colours, to represent a native, whom being more used to behold, they suffer to come nearer than a European. Another plan was to approach under a leafy screen, which, like "Birnam's Wood," was carried before you,

* A course brown blanket worn by the poorer natives.

often successfully. I have also heard of stalking up behind a bullock, but never saw it practised. But my favourite mode of getting within shot, and the one in which I found most sport, was on my well-trained pony Kangaroo, a true little Mahratta, small, but strong as a lion, a good one to go, and as steady as a rock under fire. My trusty horsekeeper beside me with the " double-barrel," and, armed myself with a spur on the left heel, and a bamboo spear in the right hand, I jogged along quietly until in view of a buck. If no covert were at hand, I rode on without taking any notice of him, but carefully reconnoitering the " terrain" as I made an extensive circle round him, and, as soon as covered by a third object, such as a rock, a clump of date trees, or an inequality in the ground, within from 80 to 120 yards of the quarry, I used to make for it at a gallop, jump off, and give him

right and left as he was bounding off, in which case he was either "kilt dead," missed altogether, or wounded. The first case seldom happened, as nothing but a bullet through the head or heart will act as an immediate quietus to an antelope: the second was very common; and in the event of the occurrence of the third contingency, you had every prospect of a good run—that is to say, if your horse were on the spot.

I will take this opportunity of giving a hint to young hands and tyros at antelope shooting. I shall never forget the delight I felt on flooring my first buck, nor my subsequent disappointment, nay, almost despair, at his final escape. I had been toiling unsuccessfully in this, my first attempt, during the greater part of a grilling hot day, and felt sick with "hope deferred" and the excessive heat of the sun on my griffin frame. At last I got a shot at a fine animal, who, after bounding off for a

few yards, fell, and was apparently at his last gasp. I ran up, almost breathless with delight at my unexpected success, stood for a second to admire my beautiful prize, and was in the act of grasping him by the horns, when, to my utter horror and dismay, with one bound he gained his feet and went off like a shot: unfortunately, I had not another to send after him, as I had been using a rifle, which, in the excitement of the moment, I never dreamt of reloading. This is one reason for my preference of the "double barrel" even for ball firing.

On the morning on which the reader has accompanied us to Surroo-Nuggur, I was particularly unfortunate in not getting shots; at last, when just about to return to the Ruins and to breakfast, I espied a fine black buck, quietly grazing at a few hundred yards distance. There was good covert within range, and I easily got a shot at him as he was bounding off. I

missed him with my first barrel, but from the *swerve* he gave after my second attempt, together with a peculiar sound, (which I know not what to compare to, unless to the noise made by suddenly expanding the lips after keeping them compressed,) I was aware he was hit, most probably between the hip and the ribs, and accordingly prepared for a tough job, nor was I disappointed.

Chennoo was at hand with the spear, and the next moment Kangaroo was doing his best. My friend was making direct for the hills, and I well knew that unless I could change his course, my chance of a nearer acquaintance with him was slight. I determined, therefore, to try his paces, and gave the pony his head, and then a taste of the spur. *Kangaroo* was as good a tit for his inches as ever pounded *gram*,*

* A species of pea on which horses are fed in India.

was in capital galloping trim, and had the bottom of the devil; still the *interloper* was too much for him, had given up his "*pranks and capers*," and had settled into a steady long gallop; this in itself proved him to have been hit hard, and made it more provoking that he was rapidly nearing the hills, and at the same time increasing the distance between us. At this critical moment, some natives emerged from a clump of date-bushes immediately before the terrified animal, and caused him to veer off, and change his course from south to due west. This was a lucky hit for me. I also went on another tack, and not being equal to him in speed, was determined to try his bottom. The full view I had of him at the turn gave me such an itching to possess his fine spiral horns (mind you, I am not *married*) that I determined to make it a "*guerre à outrance*."

Keeping, therefore, the strong pull on the snaffle, I regulated my pace so as to keep him in view. He still carried it on bravely, when, coming to the brow of a ravine, he disappeared from my sight. Now or never, thought I; he will never venture to breast the opposite bank; and I again applied the persuader, in order to be with him in the hollow. I was, however, out in my calculations; for as I reached the brink of the *nullah*,* which was both deep and broad, he was gallantly crowning the opposite brow, down the dip of which he vanished, and left me in a pleasant predicament, on a blown horse, with a deep chasm between us. But it was a time to act, and not to think; so getting to the bottom of the nullah as I best might, I crammed my steed up the opposite sides; but, alas! poor little Kan-

* Dry watercourse, formed during the rains.

garoo's sobs too plainly told me that *he* was nearly done, and on reaching the crest of the eminence he could not raise a canter. Here I pulled up to look after the chase, which I expected to see a quarter of a mile a-head. A vast plain extended before me, bounded by Aurungzebe's Mosque, with its lofty minarets shining in the now blazing sun. At a great distance I saw a flock of antelopes grazing, but *mine* was evidently not of the party. A gleam of hope shot through my breast, which was raised into certainty, when, on looking along the banks of the ravine to the left, I perceived at about fifty yards a thick clump of custard-apple bushes. I knew enough of the fleet-footed race to be perfectly sure he was ensconced under their friendly boughs.

My game was now quite the reverse from what it had been at starting: every moment's delay which went to the repair

of my nag's bellows told in an equal ratio against the buck, who, if not actually losing blood, must be getting stiffer and weaker from the effects of his wound.

Still I did not venture to put foot to ground, but, keeping a sharp look out on the clump, waited till both man and horse had recovered their wind, of which they both stood nearly equally in need. Then, and not till then, did I approach the covert: it was as I had anticipated: my old acquaintance did not wait for me in his hiding place, but, determining to die game, made for the open.

The five minutes' check had had all the effect I anticipated: he no longer looked the same animal; even the glossy hue of his back appeared dimmed; a narrow streak of crimson shewed distinctly on the white of his flank; his tongue hung out, and he went off with sobs, and at a most crippled pace—

"For, jaded now and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The lab'ring *buck* strain'd full in view."

Even in this lamentable state he gave me more trouble than I could have thought possible. I was now within so short a distance of him that I saw there was not the slightest probability of his escape, and was anxious to make short work of it, as I was dying with thirst and heat. At any other time, his plaintive sobs and cries might have moved me to pity; but my blood was up, and heated in every sense of the word. I lifted the pony with bit and spur, and we certainly gained on him, but slowly: this could not last for ever; the buck's last hour had arrived. We were all three *done*, but he was so, past recovery: a few strides more brought Kangaroo alongside of him; as we gave him the "go bye," the spear aimed at his shoulder-blade went through him like

butter, and the next instant my knife was across his throat.

In this first moment of success, mine was not the most enviable situation in the world. The Mosque served me as a landmark, by which I calculated I was five or six miles from the Ruins, with a jaded steed to carry home both the deer and myself—to say nothing of an empty stomach, a broiling sun over head, and sundry hot puffs which shewed the setting in of the land-winds. The idea of abandoning my prize never once entered my head; my only hopes rested on *Chennoo*, who I knew would endeavour to track me; nor was I mistaken; I saw his form emerge gradually from behind a swell in the ground at about the distance of a mile. I raised my hat on the end of the spear; he saw the signal, hastened towards the spot, and on arriving must have thought us rather an interesting group—the antelope now

stark and stiffening in his gore, the pony still *wagging* his tail from the effects of the run, whilst, panting and exhausted, I was crouching down under him to avoid as much as possible the scorching rays of the sun.

After leaving directions with *Chennoo* to get a couple of natives to carry home the deer, I mounted, and made the best of my way back to Surroo-Nuggur, when I found all the party assembled, and very comfortably established on their cots after a good breakfast. The amount of killed and wounded on that morning, exclusive of my share, amounted to four bucks and a fawn, three of the former brought in by Campbell, the remainder by Lacy. The non-combatants had been engaged all the morning in baiting a mongoose with a terrier, and in superintending the arrangements for breakfast.

Campbell started out again during the day

to try for hares and red-legged partridge. I had had enough for pleasure, and contented myself with strolling about in the cool shade of the vaults, and watching the exertions of the coolies, horsekeepers, &c. in dissecting the slain, of which they always come in for a share. During these proceedings I saw a ball extracted from an antelope in a remarkable manner: it had struck the animal in the shoulder, taken a diagonal direction, and was lodged in the opposite side between the skin and the ribs: the operator said he would take it out of the same aperture it had made. I must confess I was rather puzzled to know how this was to be done; he, however, accomplished it immediately, by guiding it with his finger and thumb between the skin and flesh until he brought it over the back, down the shoulder, and out of the original bore.

As fawn-curry, hare-stew, and antelope-

broth were the order of the day for tiffin, there were no absentees on that important occasion. The performances of the party were talked over till a late hour; and in hopes of as good sport the following morning, all retired to rest.

CHAPTER II.

COURSING IN THE DECCAN — HORSES AND DOGS IN INDIA — THE LAMPLIGHTER AND BLACK BESS — PARIAHS — AN ADVENTURE — THE BAUBERY HUNT — THE PAINTED DOG — HARD RUN — IN AT THE DEATH — DEAD ALIVE — FOX FOUND.

"Remember'st thou my *greyhounds* two?
O'er holt or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot or sure of fang."

MARMION.

In the stillness of the yet unborn day, the distant morning-gun of the cantonment faintly awakened the echoes of the old ruins of Surroo-Nuggur; but although its sound glided like a spirit through its darksome and gloomy recesses, scarce startling the prowling jackal or hyæna in their

nocturnal course, it passed not unheard by the present inmates of those ruins, who only awaited its welcome sound to take the field again with renewed vigour.

All were immediately on the *qui vive*—the hasty toilette was soon performed, horses saddled, dog-boys roused up, and the morning cup of coffee swallowed, the whole with such good will and alacrity that the "*Warming-Pan*" had scarcely had time to peep over the eastern hills ere we were mounted and admiring its jolly red countenance, whose smiles we all prognosticated would not fail on that day to warm the tender susceptibilities of old mother Earth, and her "flame" was very likely to be increased by the scorching breath of the land-winds now setting in. Æolus, before he could belch forth such whiffs, must surely have supped on devilled grill, or on his Infernal Majesty himself, who being thus cast adrift in these regions,

accounts for there being so much of the devil's own fun in these "*here Heastern Hingies*" than in any other part of the globe.

However, here we all were, ready for a start, and as we had committed enough havoc the preceding day amongst the horned tribe, we determined to vary our sport, and try the paces of the foxes, with which this part of the country abounds. We accordingly discarded the rifle and spear, and, mounted on our No. 1 nags, put our faith in a couple of very handsome Arab greyhounds, who understood their work right well.

By No. 1 nags, the reader may perhaps imagine we had tip-top ones; but we possessed nothing of the kind. We rode too often and too hard to be able to carry much ballast in rupees, and therefore the highest-priced horse in our stud was not more than

a five hundred rupee touch. This was a powerful but slow Persian horse, ridden by Lacy, and yclept *Surry*. Campbell had a tolerable coast Arab; and a small Mahratta called *Lamplighter* was my *baad-ghier*—a name frequently given by the Persians to a horse, and meaning "catcher of the wind"—thereby implying great speed.

Poor little Lamplighter! never do I recal thy memory without lamenting thy wretched fate! After so many gallant runs, in which hog, jackal, and fox have all succumbed to thy speed and bottom, which has even astonished one fleeter than them all, the gaunt wolf, whom thou hast before now forced to drop his long lobbing pace, and put his best foot foremost—after thus carrying me over flood and field, rock and nullah, to be purloined from thy stall by some vile Nigger for the

purpose of carrying, maybe, the bloated carcase of an old Mussulman, his wife, or other baggage!

But it is too true—such was the finale of Lamplighter! and as his beauty was his least recommendation, it is but too probable that his new master, ignorant of his worth, is subjecting him to all the drudgery of the pack-saddle. Lamplighter had certainly an unprepossessing appearance, to say the least of it. His colour alone would have been sufficient to d—n him in India, where four-legged *duns* are as much disliked as those of the biped species. In the first place, the dun is branded as a plebeian, the aristocratic Arab never wearing this livery, and a plebeian he often proves of the sulkiest and most perverse disposition. Then his shape! if ever a hybrid between a cow and a mule were animated with the noble spirit of the horse, that hybrid was Lamplighter;

he was goose-rumped and cat-hammed, carrying his tail, which nearly reached the ground, well between his legs; and then his head! ye gods! what a soap-box was spoiled! but to a judge, in the forehand, were several redeeming qualities: the shoulder well thrown back, the shortness between the knee and fetlock, which, though scarred with thorns and rocks, was firmly placed on a sound foot, and shewed that there was more in the *baste* than appeared at first sight. Such was our cavalry; and now for a peep at the *kootahs* (dogs).

These were a couple of very handsome fawn-coloured Arab dogs, as large as English greyhounds; perhaps not shewing quite so much breeding, but of great strength and power. In addition to these, we had a nondescript black devil, something like a lurcher in shape, and, though not fast enough for a fox, possessing the

quality so unusual in a greyhound, that of scent. *Black Bess* by this was often of much use, whenever a jutting rock or thicket, in the heat of the chase, hid the enemy from our view.

As the greyhound is the only dog which can be reared with success in this part of India, considerable pains are taken with them, and they often fetch high prices. They are of two kinds, one the smooth short-haired animal, called the Arab greyhound, and often scarcely to be distinguished in shape and appearance from the English dog of the same description. They are usually brought from Arabia by horse-dealers, who visit at certain seasons this part of the country. Their price varies from fifty to two hundred rupees; but it is customary to buy them in couples. The other kind is covered with long shaggy hair, particularly about the feet, which is a great

protection to them in a rocky soil. They bear some resemblance to the rough-coated Scotch deer-hound, but considerably smaller. This description comes from Persia; and although the Arab dog is perhaps the fleeter of the two, in rough stony ground he is frequently much lacerated about the lower part of the legs, which after a hard run I have often seen perfectly raw.

I believe the only sporting dog indigenous to India is the Polygar, which comes from the southern provinces, where, being of great strength and ferocity, he is employed by the mountaineers of the Coimbatoor districts in hunting the bear and wild hog. They attach so much value to a particular breed of these dogs, that it is only with the greatest difficulty they can be induced to part with them.

The Polygar has anything but a handsome appearance; he is built in a much

coarser mould than the greyhound, and is entirely denuded of hair; from this circumstance, in cold weather he looks miserable in the extreme, but is at all times fierce, and often unmanageable, except by his keeper.

This part of the country (the Deccan), and in fact India generally, does not agree with European dogs; like their masters, their livers often get affected, they grow sickly, linger for some time, and die. I am not at liberty to mention whether these symptoms are accelerated by indulging in their English habits, or from being as much addicted as their lords to *brandy-pance*, (brandy and water.) Be this as it may, there is certainly a great resemblance in the diseases, and also in the remedies, sometimes successfully adopted — the former, liver and dysentery; the latter, calomel, calomel, and calomel, to the end of the teeth and

chapter; and I have no doubt but that a *run* at Cheltenham would prove highly beneficial to any *lucky dog* fortunate enough to revisit his native land after a protracted residence in India.

The rough-haired terrier is the hardiest importation; he suffers least from heat, and may occasionally be made useful in jungle-shooting.

The spaniel sometimes takes kindly to the climate, and, if well trained, will afford good amusement in quail-shooting.

The pointer is the most *bilious* of the set, and more frequently on the doctor's list than out of it.

In some parts of Bengal they have fox-hounds, but I understand it is necessary to renew the pack from England every two or three years.

In the treatment of English dogs in India, the two *vital* principles to be observed are, never to expose them unne-

cessarily to the sun, and strongly inculcate abstemiousness in diet. Seven days in the week should be *banyans*—in fact, the dogs should become Brahmins, forswear animal food, and live on boiled rice softened with a little broth to give it a *relish*. The same regimen might be followed with regard to the Persian and Arab dogs, with the addition perhaps of occasionally a little boiled mutton mixed with the rice.

All this may appear a hoax to a John Bull griffin, as much as that of its being requisite to have one person to take care of every brace of greyhounds, to feed them, rub them down, walk them out in their clothing, with as much ceremony as is used towards a racer in training. But stop a bit, my lad—I mean you with the phiz like a full-blown peony or a bunch of raw meat; none of your "half-grins and purser's laughs!" wait till a few land-

winds have taken some of the blushes out of your baby-face; wait till you have made away with as much calomel and claret as your humble servant, and you may then perhaps laugh on the wrong side of your mouth, and believe what I am telling you.

I think I have now enumerated every species of sporting dog in India; but imagine not, gentle reader, that the canine species here is confined to these; would to heaven it were! and that the wretch called the "*pariah*" dog had never seen the light of day, or propagated its species.

Every bazar swarms with these curs; every heap of ashes is occupied by its slumbering Cerberus; and these disgusting animals act the part of scavengers-general to the natives, for which service they perhaps meet with so much patronage and protection. It is only astonishing that

more cases of hydrophobia do not occur. However, in the very hot weather, to guard against accidents, war is generally declared against these vermin; orders are issued for the destruction of all stragglers, and a reward of one *anna*, or the sixteenth part of a rupee, is given for every *tail*.

I was one day much amused at the manner in which a soldier got possession of the latter appendage. The man, who was at the time on duty, was seated on the steps of the verandah of the guard-house, discussing some bread and cheese, at which a large pariah was looking in a very wistful manner, but still keeping at a respectful distance. The soldier was using the kindest expressions of endearment to induce the half-famished creature to approach and share his frugal meal—whereupon I immediately put him down as a philanthropist; one so overflowing with

the milk of human kindness as to have a spare drop even for a poor *parry*. After a great deal of coquetting, the *baste* approached, and was about, not in the politest manner, to make a grab at the tempting morsel; but the tempter was evidently an old soldier, and too much for him; whilst the right hand was extended with every token of friendship, the left was gracefully resting on the left hip: nothing like attitude! thinks I to myself. The dog made a dash at the cheese, but there is much between the cup and the lip: the soldier's bayonet was out like lightning, and buried to the hilt in the chest of his confiding friend. The ruffian then, with the greatest *nonchalance*, finished his meal, took out his pocket-handkerchief, carefully wiped the deadly weapon, and with the identical knife he had just been using, "*docked*" his still quivering victim in a masterly style, and, the *wag-*

ging tail in one hand, and a *waggish* salutation with the other, asked the officer of the guard for permission to go and claim his *anna*. All this was done without moving a muscle of his countenance, on which was depicted the self-satisfied look of having accomplished a meritorious action. So much for my philanthropist!

This recals to my mind a ludicrous circumstance, which, however, was likely to have had a fatal termination, in which case, O Phyllis! thou wouldst have had much to have answered for. Phyllis, thou must know, beloved reader, was a little female dog, commonly called a . . . . . I really forget the name; *mais n'importe*—her charms, however, constantly attracted to the house legions of gallant pariahs from the neighbouring bazar, in such numbers that they nightly disturbed my slumbers. One night in particular—and I well remember it, close and sultry, and

swarms of musquitoes were buzzing about—on this said night the *parrys* were more assiduous than ever in their attention, disturbed me more than usual, and I was less than usual in a mood to endure their intrusion. Every time I got into a doze I was awakened by a snarl, or the more obvious signals of a pitched battle. I lay for a long time in hopes that they would at last take up their slippers and depart in peace, but I awaited in vain, till at last tottering Patience fell from her throne; vengeful Ire took her seat; I arose in wrath, grasped my sword, and vowed death and vengeance against all the canine tribe. The night was overcast, dark, and sultry; not a breath of air was stirring, and the young moon, masked by a mantle of lowering clouds, shed but a dim uncertain light. I crept stealthily out of my room, crossed the hall, and peered into the verandah, on the floor of

which I saw something white: I glided gently along the wall, and approached the object; it was one of my deadly foes, the disturber of my rest, and a pariah of the largest description! Blind with rage and vengeance, I took one more step towards my victim, and made a deadly thrust at him with the sword: to my horror, the supposed dog rosé up, uttered a human groan, and fell at full length on the floor. It was my faithful *chokrah* (servant-boy) whom I had stabbed!

"Where are you hit?" cried I, running up almost breathless to the poor fellow, who lay quivering on the floor like a galvanized frog. "Ah! Sahib, in my . . . ." He could say no more, but applied his hand to his nether parts. By this time the other servants had made their appearance: I lost no time in further inquiries, but, running to the stable, got on a horse, (*en chemise,*) and galloped off for the

doctor, whom I roused up, and soon brought to the scene of slaughter. By the time we arrived, Kishnah was sitting up; he had bled profusely, which had lessened the pain, and the doctor pronounced the wound, which was in the fleshy part of the thigh, not to be dangerous, although deep, and within a hair's-breadth of the vital parts. The night, as before mentioned, was dark and sultry; he had, as servants in India generally do, taken up his abode in the verandah, with no other clothing than his *cummerbund*, or cloth that goes round the loins; the rest of his body, being of the colour of darkness, was invisible, and to this may be attributed his escape. Three weeks saw him again on his legs; and the next time I was more cautious in waging war with the admirers of Phyllis.

Whilst on the subject of dogs, I cannot forbear mentioning a pack which we at-

tempted to set on foot, and which, from the variety of curs of which it was composed, went by the name of the *Baubery** Hunt. Our ambition did not extend beyond bagged foxes and jackals; however, on one occasion, after circulars had been issued to all the members of the Baubery, stating the time and place of the meet, no fox was to be had for love or money; we were completely *nonplussed*. At last a brilliant idea struck me: I sent my servant to the bazar, with directions to catch a dog that bore the greatest resemblance to a jackal; he returned with an animal certainly in shape not unlike what we wanted, but not at all tallying in colour, our captive being perfectly white: it was, however, too late to replace him; our only plan was to *disguise* him as best we might. There happened to be some red paint at

* *Baubery* means noise or disturbance of any kind.

hand; we set immediately about his toilet, and no lady ever applied rouge with more effect: in five minutes he looked so beautiful that his mother would not have known him. But it was not in the power of paint to change the shape of his tail; therefore, having supplied ourselves with the brush of a defunct jackal, we cunningly fitted this to his spanker-boom with sundry pieces of whipcord; and putting the finishing touch to his dress by anointing him with oil of aniseed, he was carefully deposited in a sack, placed on the shoulders of a horse-keeper, and conveyed to a bit of jungle about a quarter of a mile from the meet, and four or five from the cantonment.

We mustered on that day a strong field; it was moreover cloudy, and promised good scent. Ten minutes' law was allowed to the "painter;" the dogs were then put on his track, and went off full cry. Every

one swore it was likely to be the best run we had yet had. I—n, an old Yorkshire breakneck, was in ecstasy. "D—n it, you know," cried he, as we viewed the brute, "there he goes! a fine fellow he is, and what a pace he keeps up! but hold hard, gentlemen; for God's sake don't ride over the dogs!" I—n was the oracle of the hunt, and the *parry* was put down as a jackal of the first water. At first his long legs had the best of our little mongrel terriers, but their bottom soon began to tell. We were now running in view; and as we gained on him, several of the knowing ones began to be sadly puzzled; for although the paint was good paint, and had moreover been laid on thick, it was not entirely proof against bushes and water, and a piece of swampy ground we had just crossed had done a great deal towards softening the tints. "He must be a devilish old one," said I—n, with a

hard pull on his snaffle; "see! he's quite grey!"—"Then, by G—d," cried B——, "it must be through funk, for I'll swear he was not that colour before we crossed the hollow!" However, to make short of a long story, the poor *parry* died the death amidst shouts of merriment from all who witnessed his *rouge* and false feathers. I said *all* who saw the fun, but no; there was *one*, our oracle, who did not enjoy the joke: he said it was a boyish trick, withdrew his patronage, and never more risked his reputation by joining the "Baubery Hunt."

But, behold! I headed my chapter with "Coursing," and find myself flying off at a tangent in a "dog-hunt." I shall therefore "hark back," and try to bring up my lee-way, by saying, that on the morning in question we started in capital riding trim, our nags fresh and in good condition, and the dogs scarcely to be held in the

slips. We made for the eastward, skirting the rising swells about Munsherabad, the minarets of whose Mosque we soon lost sight of as we reached the rugged ground at the foot of the hills, where we had a fair chance of falling in with a brush, cutting off Reynard's retreat from his rocky fastness, and obliging him to take the comparatively level ground below; though even here it was in many places break-neck work enough—

> "Where oft both path and hill were torn,
> Where wintry torrent down had borne,
> And heaped upon the cumber'd land
> Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand."

The *nullahs*, or dry watercourses, worn deep into the hard soil from the flow of the waters during the rainy season, would in themselves have proved puzzlers to a young horse or inexperienced rider, to say nothing of the rocks, occasionally rugged and jagged, and then extending in large

flat horizontal strata in the intervening spaces.

I am convinced that many a Leicestershire man and horse who never *craned* at ox-fence or bull-finch would pause ere he rode at full speed over these "dry and stony places;" and here no other pace will suit, as, to keep dog and fox in view, both of which are absolutely necessary, you must not spare your own neck or your horse's pins.

We were creeping quietly along one of these nullahs, when suddenly the joyful sound of "Kolah, Sahib! Kolah!" (a fox, Sir; a fox!) burst from the lips of Moutou, the little dog-boy. He was, however, too well trained to slip without orders, and had besides made a slight mistake: it proved to be not a fox, but a fine jackal.

There was a moment's pause as to whether we should risk the safety of our noble greyhounds with such a sturdy an-

tagonist, jackals having the ungentleman-like practice of occasionally snapping a dog's leg whenever they can lay hold of it. But prudence gave way: we cried "havoc! and let slip the dogs," and then followed as best we might. The jackal in the meantime had made the most of our consultation, and we had to ride like "bricks" to regain the distance we had lost. The Arabs were well laid in, and the lurcher close at their heels: our object was of course to cut him off from the hills, to which the nearer we approached the worse became the ground. After about half a mile of fair riding at the best pace, our wily antagonist luffed up suddenly, and made a desperate effort for the hills. We were now obliged to go it in earnest, and the ground was rugged and broken in the extreme, but our nags were old stagers, and scrambled over it at a

clipping pace. The Lamplighter was famed for his cleverness in crossing this sort of country; he took the lead, and kept it. But accidents will happen to the best of horses: whilst at the top of his speed, in crossing one of these confounded watercourses, he leaped rather short, and we were the next instant rolling in its bed. But no mischief was done; the Lamplighter in a jiffy was on his legs, and I on his back, *gently* persuading him to make up his lost ground. We were now getting very near the hills, rapidly gaining on our foe, and straining every nerve. On crossing one of the flat masses of rock already mentioned, Campbell's horse's legs flew from under him, and he fell on his side with tremendous violence. As I shot past him, I had only time to cry out, "Are you much hurt?"—"All right!" was the answer, and Campbell was left

to his fate, thereby strongly exemplifying the fact that equal sympathy is shewn in a hunting-field in India and England.

We were all pretty well winded; but *Jack* was completely blown, and, although within a stone's throw of his strong-holds, was fain to turn to bay, which he did in gallant style, and fought like a hero. The greyhounds, which were up first, rolled him over several times, and Black Bess arriving must needs have a finger in the pie, but paid dearly for her officiousness, and got terribly mauled: however the odds were too great, and Jack at last remained apparently a lifeless corpse —game to the last.

The dogs were now secured, and we were examining the injuries which they and our nags had received during the chase, when Campbell came up, leading his horse—himself rather *shuck*, and the grey a good deal cut, but no bones broken.

Whilst thus dismounted, and engaged in discussing the merits of the run, one of the horsekeepers, who by this time had come up, suddenly cried out, "Gheah, Sahib; gheah!" (he is gone, Sir; he is gone), pointing to the jackal, who, probably taking little interest in our conversation, had effected a case of resurrection, and was very quietly taking himself off. The villain had too much the start of us, and was too near the rocks, to render further pursuit of any use: philosophy and resignation were therefore the order of the day; and as it was still young (i. e., the day), after sending back to headquarters the wounded, Lacy and myself followed up our sport.

We were not long before we found, and this time it was a *raal* fox and no mistake. He took us over ground very similar to that already described, and, after a sharp run of a couple of miles, was *picked up* in

masterly style, and his brush added to our former trophies of horns, hides, &c.

The sun was now high—our dogs and horses had had enough for one morning's work—we were moreover quite ready for breakfast; therefore, turning northward, we jogged on towards the Ruins, and did justice on our arrival to a substantial and well-earned repast.

CHAPTER III.

SPORTING AT GIBRALTAR — THE CORK WOOD — THE ALMORAÏMA — CONFLICT WITH A MAD DOG — EFFECTS OF A SCRATCH — SYMPTOMS OF HYDROPHOBIA — DON JUAN RODRIGUEZ — SCENES IN THE CORK CONVENT — OLD MARTHA — THE STORY OF THE NOVICE.

"But still there's method in his madness."

SHAKSPEARE.

It was on a bright April morning that our party sallied forth from the grim-looking old Rock of Gibraltar: the sun, already powerful, was felt, in its full force, in the sheltered parts of the town, and it was not until after emerging from the archway of the Landport, crossing its draw-bridge, and reaching the open space of the Neu-

tral Ground, that we felt the cooling effects of a fine north-westerly breeze. It was a delightful day even for this Elysian clime, where mists and clouds are not quite so plentiful as in Old England—a day in which the wretched might rejoice, the Atheist fall down and worship his Maker, and the cynic feel some of the milk of human kindness towards his fellow-man: it was, in fine, a day peculiarly adapted to our purpose, and we all felt its genial effects on our spirits.

Our party consisted of five, two of whom were strangers who were on that day to view the lions in the neighbourhood of the Columns of Hercules; and from our apparel, it might easily have been fancied that we were about not only to view, but to engage in deadly conflict with, the kings of the forest.

Shooting jackets were the order of the day, and the rifle or fowling piece slung

over the shoulder might either be for sport or protection; but the holsters, from which might occasionally be seen protruding the butt-end of a pistol, smelt strongly of the latter.

In fact, the Cork Wood, about ten miles from the Rock, is in these Carlos and Christinos times anything but safe to the unarmed traveller; and as we were determined to be equally prepared for a "ladron" or a deer, we were equipped accordingly, presenting indeed so formidable an appearance that we might easily have at first sight been mistaken for some free sons of the forest or a party of guerillas.

We passed the Spanish lines, the ruined fort of San Felipe, cantered gaily along the shores of the Bay for a couple of miles, when, turning inland, we made for the town of San Roque, situated on a hill three or four miles from the sea. After satisfying the curiosity of our stranger

friends by giving them the sight of a Spanish town, we turned towards the Hills, and crossing the beautiful valley which runs at the foot of San Roque, we made our way between hedges of the aloe and prickly pear, till we reached the Pine Wood, where, with one accord, we all drew in our reins to contemplate the beauty of the scene: and to one accustomed to the tame although rich landscape of England, the present view has peculiar charms. The hills, covered with the palmetto, wild lavender, and enamelled with flowers of a thousand species, offer a marked contrast to the gloomy foliage of the pines, the lighter tints of the cork trees colouring the back ground, whilst the picture is closed by the white towers of Castellar, brought out in strong relief on the blue of the hills in the far far distance, which gradually melt and lose themselves in the horizon.

With such scenes as these before our eyes, it is not to be wondered at that time fled quickly, and we soon found ourselves in the shades of the Cork Wood. Here scenery of a different kind presented itself, which, though more confined, was equally beautiful. As we wound through the valleys, we lost the sea breeze we had hitherto enjoyed, but in exchange had the grateful shade afforded by the old cork trees and gigantic oaks, which, meeting over head, were more closely united by the wild vine, the ivy, and many other creepers, forming a bower impervious to the rays of the sun, under which we journeyed on till we came in sight of the Almoraima, better known as the *Cork Convent*, from its romantic site in the depths of the forest, composed principally of these trees.

Don Juan Ventura Rodriguez, the Padre or Spiritual Director of the esta-

blishment, was an old friend of mine, and received our party with his usual attention and hospitality. After taking us through the different cells, the chapel, &c., we were returning to the old man's sanctum to get some refreshments, when, on crossing the patio, or yard, our attention was attracted by what is always interesting to the lover of the Chase, viz., five or six couple of sporting dogs, which he told us were employed for hunting the wild boar. "But, alas!" said the old gentleman, who appeared to possess some of Friar Tuck's sporting propensities, "it is a *lastima*, a thousand pities, that the best dog of the pack is now so old as to be unserviceable; and of late years has been so fierce and intractable, that it has been necessary to keep him tied up, and he is to be destroyed to-day." We sincerely sympathized with the Padre on the death of the poor *perro*.

A couple of bottles of the Padre's good wine, with some bread and cheese, soon diverted our thoughts from this melancholy channel. The Padre was a great politician, and over our wine we were learnedly discussing the events of the time, talking of the respective merits of Espartero, Iriate, the Count de Negri, and a whole host of Spanish heroes, when our attention was suddenly called by the sound of a shot, followed by the cries of a dog, which were immediately succeeded by the confused and mingled sound of voices in the long corridors and galleries of the convent. This rapidly approached, and we had scarcely time to conjecture the reason, when a dog, foaming at the mouth, and covered with blood, bounded into the room. There was no time or space for retreat: the infuriated animal rushed at the spot where stood the Padre and myself; *his* cloak was off his shoul-

ders in the twinkling of an eye; I received the brute on its folds; a pistol was at hand on the table, and its discharge sent my friend to the land of shades. It was the old hound; and never shall I forget its dying appearance. His eyes, sunken and bleared with age, but bloodshotten withal, rolled on me with a malignant glare ere they closed for ever; whilst from his distended jaws was issuing blood mingled with foam, which partly concealed the time-worn and decayed stumps of what had once been his fangs.

During the fray, I had somehow received a slight scratch on the hand, but it was trifling; and soon after, mounting our horses, we returned to Gibraltar, and in a few days the whole circumstance was nearly forgotten. Days and weeks passed on; the scratch I had received had closed, but still looked irritated and inflamed; to this I at first paid little attention, but

an unaccountable gloom overspread my spirits, which in vain I endeavoured to shake off. Day by day this feeling increased, and weighed on me like a leaden mantle, clothing my day-thoughts in the darkest hues, whilst my nights were passed in disturbed and broken slumbers, from which I was frequently startled by the most appalling visions. Haunted in this manner, I at last dreaded equally the light of day and the shades of night. In this state of mind it is not surprising if my looks and actions betrayed my feelings: I became pale and emaciated, sullen and morose, to such a degree that it could no longer escape the observation of my friends, and to them it appeared the more unaccountable as I could assign no reason for the change.

In these circumstances I had recourse to the bottle, under whose influence I frequently experienced the wildest bursts

of animal spirits, but which would again sink in an inverse ratio the moment they were no longer sustained by the generous fluid.

It was at one of these orgies that a light flashed on me which had nearly scorched up at once life and madness in the bud—would to Heaven it had been so! The wine had flowed freely, and not only myself but most of the party had already felt its effects. I had filled a bowl to the brim, and was raising it to my lips, when an unaccountable sensation overcame me, —a feeling of the greatest repugnance and aversion for the liquid, mingled with a sentiment of fear and horror which I cannot describe, but which contracted the muscles of my throat, and arrested my already upraised arm. I tried in vain to overcome it, and was at last obliged to replace the glass on the table.

Could it be so? were these the incipient

signs of hydrophobia? In an instant my thoughts recurred to the convent: the old hound in his last agonies was before me; the wound on my hand; I cast my eyes on it; the scarcely-healed scar was still there, looking more angry and inflamed than ever. This was conclusive, the Demon of Madness had *marked* me for his own in ineffaceable, undeniable characters!

For a moment I buried my face in my hands to collect my thoughts, and then hurried from the apartment: my friends, alarmed at my action, followed me. Though madness was now with all its fearful images boiling in my blood, I can perfectly remember that with the cunning peculiar to insanity I assumed an appearance of composure, and, merely saying that I felt unwell, desired to retire to my chamber.

When there, I was still sufficiently collected to know what I was about, and also

to be aware that this self-possession would soon vanish, when God knows what might ensue! On this I dared not reflect, lest it should hasten the catastrophe. No time was to be lost; therefore, writing a few hasty lines to a friend, I informed him of my state, and begged him by all that he most valued, when the fearful paroxysm took place, which I felt to be fast approaching, not to suffer me to linger in dreadful agonies, but to remove me from a world of pain and horror.

All this I can perfectly recollect: I remember also, but more faintly, and as an object seen through a mist, that mischief was brewing in my mind, and I still had perception enough to *know* that it was brewing, and that I should soon not be able to resist its impulse. My mind with still more dimness retains the impression of having locked my door, and throwing the key out of the window.

More I cannot recal; body and soul appeared henceforth rolled up together in a chaos of horrors; time and space were from this moment unknown, unmarked, unheeded by me.

At last *one* gleam of reason lit up this fearful void; I found myself fettered and bound down on a pallet. I heard footsteps approaching; some figures appeared bearing a huge mattress: I instantly foresaw my doom, still I could neither move nor speak, fly nor call for aid, and ..... with the cold drops on my forehead I awoke!

Reader! 'twas but a dream! I had that evening returned from an excursion to the Cork Convent, ate a hearty dinner, read the article of the mad poodle dog in the Sporting Magazine, and the result of my late repast and lucubrations was a night-mare in the shape of the above hydrophobiac dream.

The Cork "Convent" (I love the monastic sound) was frequently the rendezvous of many a sporting and jovial party, who, freed from the military restraints of a garrison life, were glad, some to throw off the irksome load of command, others the no less galling yoke of obedience; and all, under the auspices of the old Padre, and the cheering influence of his stock of Malaga, either "dulce" or "seco," or maybe the additional stimulus of his "muy particolar y precioso" aguardiente, to say nothing of a good "olio," or some forest-fed bacon, flanked with the newest and freshest laid poached eggs,—all, I say, from the grey-headed veteran of a hundred hard-fought fields, to the beardless and smooth-faced boy, whose glory and sorrows were, like young Bruin's, all before him,—all felt disposed to make themselves comfortable, their "compaueros" happy; and to prove how completely

we felt so, the peaceful inmates of the once holy building have been more than once startled from their noon-day siesta, as the sounds of our joyous song rang through the long and reverberating galleries, and penetrated the inmost cells of the venerable edifice.

On such occasions, the old Padre's rigid features would relax into a grim smile, his sunken eye would brighten up with a ray of gladness, and as he opened the massive oak beaufet to obtain a fresh supply of his "precioso y particolar," he would good-naturedly exclaim, "Que alegre son los Ingleses, pero son todos locos." "What merry fellows are these Englishmen! but they are all mad."

Old Don Juan was a great politician, and on paying him a visit, I made a point of always putting in my pocket two or three of the latest numbers of the Gibraltar Chronicle; and our social repast over,

the expression of the good old man's countenance would have been worthy of the pencil of Hogarth, as, when, after many unsuccessful endeavours to catch my eye, he would at last, on doing so, give the well-known signal for me to follow him; and throwing his ample cloak over his left shoulder, glide silently out of the refectory, and mysteriously lead the way to that holy of holies, his own sanctum.

Well do I remember the small cell, in extent scarcely nine feet square, with its homely pallet and crucifix, the low antique chairs and small but massive ancient oaken table, the venerable "armoire" of the same material, on which was the well-thumbed breviary, and a few dark and patriarchal-looking volumes, containing, in the Latin language, the lives of the saints and apostles; whilst its interior contained, (and we blush to record it of

the holy anchorite,) sundry vials, holding anything but holy water, and serving probably to soothe the sorrows of the fair penitents whose sins brought them to confession, or maybe to give strength to their spiritual adviser in the arduous duties of inflicting penance or granting absolution to the frail sinners.

However, albeit I came not to be shrived of my sins, nor did the old priest even attempt to make a convert of me, yet the Gibraltar Chronicle, to say nothing of my own winning ways, had laid "a mi disposicion" both the keys of his goodwill and of the mysterious beaufet, whose inmost recesses were ransacked on these occasions; and then, after having placed on the table abundant supplies of "dulces" (sweetmeats) and raisins, flanked by a small flagon of that most luscious of wines, "el vino de Mansanilla," the old gentleman, taking a seat opposite to me,

and looking stedfastly in my face, would inquire earnestly what "noticias" I had brought.

I invariably replied by "deploying" the newspaper, and translating from its "columns" such passages as I thought would interest him most, and which related chiefly to the progress of the civil war in the northern provinces; for although the celebrated Gomez had made a short time before a rapid "marche militaire" through the fair province of Andalusia, only stopping at the gates of Gibraltar, still his meteor course had been evanescent as it was rapid; the Moorish blood of the south is not apt to be damped by anticipating misfortunes, and the peasant had resumed his labours, forgetful of the past, and careless about any future calamities.

Although my friend the Padre never expressed himself to that effect, and I refrained from pressing him on the subject,

still I had strong suspicions of my own that at heart he was a stanch "Carlino;" nor, circumstanced as he was, could I blame him for favouring that party which afforded its countenance and support to his vocation, rather than to the one which, by upsetting the monastic institutions, had reduced the Cork Convent and its spiritual director to their present abject condition.

On the expulsion of the friars, Don Juan Ventura Rodriguez was allowed to remain, in order to officiate as cura, or curate, to the neat little chapel attached to the edifice, whose numerous cells became tenanted by new inmates, the basquina and mantilla succeeding to the cowl and sackcloth; not that we mean to insinuate, the place was either converted into a nunnery or boarding-school for young ladies. Although it was now the residence of a numerous female tribe, the

wives and daughters of the hardy carboneros, who, either engaged at their dingy vocation of making charcoal in the neighbouring mountains, or of conveying it when made in huge loads on mules and donkies to the markets of Gibraltar or Algesiras, were seldom to be seen here during the day-time; and the only male occupant of the convent appeared to be the padre and an "espiegle" lad named Pedro, who officiated in every capacity of a servant, and who no doubt assisted his reverend master in keeping in order the *carboneritas* entrusted to his charge in the absence of their lawful protectors.

After discussing the news of the day, and the progress of the different belligerent parties, the padre's next greatest pleasure was to exhibit the neat little chapel, which was the delight of his soul, the apple of his eye. How often have I listened to the old man's dissertations on its

foundation, antiquity, history, and the numerous miracles for which it had subsequently become celebrated—of how it was founded by the Marquises of Moscoso y Castellar, who built it on the site of an ancient Moorish castle, called Almoraïma, and richly endowed it,—of how powerful and wealthy its monks afterwards became, of how the virgin of the Almoraima took it under her particular patronage, of how a noble Castellan lady, performing a pilgrimage to this place, was attacked in the depths of the neighbouring forest by "ladrones" (banditti,) of how her attendants were put to death, and how her affrighted horse carried her from amidst the robbers to the gates of the convent, where, suddenly stopping, she pitched over his head, but, by calling at this critical moment on the Holy Virgin for protection, escaped without injury. "Y aqui está todo pintao," said he, proud of being thus

able to prove his assertions by pointing out to me the vilest daub that ever disgraced a sign-post, in which the artist had attempted faithfully to record the whole event. The finale, or somerset of the lady being most gracefully executed.

In a recess thickly hung round with offerings in gratitude for miraculous cures effected by her supernatural agency, clad in sky-blue silk, and covered with tinsel ornaments, sat, as large as life, the image of the patroness of the convent, the "Santa Virgen del Almoraïma." The old padre approached most reverentially, and, bowing down before the "graven image," devoutly made the sign of the cross, and muttered a short prayer. I however thought, nor do I believe I was mistaken, that he would not have the worse opinion of my piety, if, in lieu of the above operations, I dropped a "pez-

zetta,"* into the receptacle destined to receive more substantial tributes than prayers, at her holy shrine.

But besides alms and prayers, other offerings attracted the attention; on recovering from any disease, the sufferer, as a token of gratitude, causes an effigy in wax to be made of the part affected, which is suspended before the altar of the saint whose assistance he has received during his illness. This little recess, in consequence of the number of these presentations, had a most singular appearance,—arms, legs, fingers, and noses, being displayed in the greatest abundance, and variety of shapes and sizes. Several long thick plaited tresses, of what, at some former period, had no doubt been beautiful specimens of luxuriant raven locks, but which now bore evidence to the depredations of time, mould and moths,

* About ninepence.

shewed that even female vanity could not save the greatest adornment of the person from the inroads of bigotry and superstition.

Amongst other things, I observed the shattered stock of an old gun, separated from the barrel, and occupying a conspicuous place in this collection of curiosities. I was informed that this had belonged to a "Caçador" (hunter,) who, in pursuing his vocation, had been attacked by a ferocious and hungry wolf; he fired his piece at the infuriated animal, but in the discharge it burst; he however retained sufficient presence of mind at this critical moment to invoke the patroness of the Almoraïma, who not only preserved him from any injury attendant on the accident, but laid his savage assailant dead at his feet.

The next "beat" of my reverend friend, and to which he was very fond of intro-

ducing strangers, was the vestry—where, within strong massive coffers, were deposited, in all the splendour of damask silk and gold embroidery, the pontifical dresses he wore on state occasions; the reader would be astonished at their richness and number, which I shall not attempt to detail, lest I should tire his patience as much as my own has more than once been, by attending at the display of the old gentleman's finery. Suffice it to say, that their inspection generally lasted a full hour, and by the time it was over, his reverence and the unfortunate person whom he might have been victimizing felt both equally inclined for their after-dinner siesta.

Whilst he indulged in this, to a Spaniard, most essential operation, (if so it can be called,) I generally paid a visit to some other friends I had within the holy precincts. It may perhaps, however, be neces-

sary to state how I formed the above acquaintances, and who were the objects of them.

I before mentioned an "elfin" page of the padre, ycleped Pedro, a very Flibbertigibbet for mischief of every kind. On one occasion, he had ciceroned me to an old Moorish tower in the vicinity of the convent, of which I was anxious to get a sketch. It was in the month of July; the weather was oppressively hot; I had languidly thrown myself on the grass, beneath the refreshing shade of an old cork tree, and was endeavouring to wile away the sultry hours till the coolness of evening should enable me to mount my horse and return homeward.

Between the puffs of my havannah, I was exchanging a few broken sentences with Master Pedro, amongst other things inquiring as to the present inhabitants of the convent. He said that they consisted

entirely of carboneros, who were all day engaged in the hills; but that if I had any wish to see the señoras of the establishment, he could gratify my curiosity by parading them all in a "lump." I gladly acceded, and following my guide, he entered the shady "Patio," or court-yard, cooled by the fine orange-trees which adorned it, and crossing the verandah, or gallery, by which it was surrounded, stopped opposite a wide folding door, and said, in a low tone of voice, "Caballero, entre usted. As soon as I throw open the door, do you boldly enter. Sin cuidad."

I suspected, from the manner of the urchin, that he was about to play me some trick; but being ripe for a "spree," I did as he directed, and never did the simple act of opening a door display to me a sight more calculated to awaken astonishment —what I saw is more easily imagined than

described. The door led into a spacious hall, on whose floor of hardened clay, stretched on rugs and pallets, lay, at their "siesta," in every attitude of languid repose, the forms of about a dozen (ladies, pray shut the book) nearly naked nymphs. Never had painter a better opportunity of scanning the forms of the fairest of nature's creation, though *fair* is scarcely applicable to the nut-brown complexions, warmed into a ruddy glow by the desert blood which circulated in their veins—the long and sleepy eyelash and raven locks bearing evidence to their Moorish origin.

This was all seen much quicker than related, the noise of the opening door awakened one dark maiden; she gave the alarm; and, since the days when Diana was surprised by Actæon, never was there such a hubbub in a female coterie. To say that they were merely en deshabille, would not be telling the "naked" truth;

to say that they were entirely so, would be vile defamation; but, if taking a "juste milieu," which would place them with a chemise (and some were very scanty ones) as their only garment, it would probably come nearer the mark.

A shrill cry, and a movement not at all according either to Dundas or Torrens, which brought them in a confused and irregular mass at the further end of the apartment, was the work of a minute, whilst I stood open-mouthed on the threshold, and the young blackguard Pedro was standing behind me, and giving vent to immoderate peals of laughter. I was not, however, doomed to the fate of the unhappy hunter, nor was their wrath so vehement as that of the buskin'd huntress and her virgin train; they immediately detected the cause of my intrusion, and loading Master Pedro with "malditos" and "demonios," though, at

the same time, they could not help joining in the laugh, requested me to retire, which I immediately did.

This little scene served to put me on a footing of great intimacy with the "Carboneras" of the Almoraïma. I used always to joke them on the siesta scene, and on my visits to the convent invariably beat up their quarters. My particular ally was an old lady of the name of Martha, who, with spectacles on nose, as she sat knitting the coarse woollen hose worn by the mountaineers of the Sierras, and surrounded by many of the "mozas,"* would spin most interminable yarns, principally relating to the "milagros" (miracles) performed by the tutelar virgin of the spot. I was frequently an attentive auditor of the old lady's wonderful relations, one of which, and I well remember the oft-told tale, ran nearly as follows:—

* Maid—unmarried woman.

The Story of the Novice.

"You well know, Hijas, the small cottage on the other side of the Guadranque, at the bend of the torrent, where the large chaparros (cork trees) overhang its boiling waters; this for many years, and before any of you had seen the light, or even before you, Caballero, had breathed the breath of life," added she, turning to me, "was long the abode of my poor 'defunto' and myself. He, good man, cultivated the small patch of barley which stretches down towards the river, tended a few sheep, and occasionally, though very seldom, took a hand in the contrabanda.

"In those days, bendito sea Dios, I was younger than I am at present, and prettier also, Senor,—God forgive my vanity!—and this convent was also far different from what it is now. The portly abbot,

cowled monks, and stout lay brothers, were something to look at—even Don Juan was in those days 'buen mozo;' but alas! we must all grow old. Well, when my husband was engaged in the Sierras, or on some smuggling expedition, I would often come here to supply the holy brotherhood with fresh milk, eggs, or, maybe, a fat kid; for the poor creatures—may they be blessed!—liked the good things of this world; and, 'povrecitos,' they required them, to sustain their spirits under the severe penances often imposed on them by the superior.

"As I before said, my children, I was often here, though at the time I little dreamt that I should ever be an inmate of the holy edifice, nor would such a thought have been safe in those days of the Inquisition. Besides taking provisions, I sometimes went to the confessional, and the 'fraile' who used to

shrive me of my sins was a stout, good-natured, good-looking, person—ah, picaras, I see you smile—of some fifty-five or maybe sixty years of age; but years sat lightly on his robust frame and easy temper, which led him often to amuse me by relating tales which had happened within these walls in his younger days—you may therefore guess how long *that* must have been ago—as far back as he could remember.

"A young man was admitted to the convent who was said to be of high rank and ancient lineage, but from his reserve, nay, moroseness, nothing could be elicited, as during the first year of his residence Antonio never mixed with the brotherhood, except during the attendance at chapel, after which he rigorously shut himself up in his cell. At the end of that period, a youth, whose cheek was not yet shaded by the slightest down,

and appeared scarcely to have passed the age of childhood, but whose pale features and deep melancholy boded early misfortune, was admitted to his noviciate.

"An intimacy, apparently caused by a similarity of taste and disposition, was quickly formed between him and Antonio, till at last they became inseparable. Frequently would they visit each other's cells; still no suspicion existed amongst the community of anything being amiss, till one evening an old wretch,—who by playing the spy over the monks sought to ingratiate himself with the superior, and had for that purpose long narrowly watched their motions — discovered, by listening at the door of Antonio's cell, that the pale-faced boy was — oh! horror! — a woman in disguise, who had been long before the betrothed of Antonio, and had taken this means of enjoying once more his society.

"This fact once ascertained, the 'espio tuniante' ran to retail the news to the superior, who lost not a moment in going himself to ascertain the fact, which, on entering the room, was put beyond all doubt. Antonio saw that but one road of safety existed; the Inquisition and all its horrors rose before him; he instantly took his resolution; with one blow he felled the superior, and calling to his 'querida' to detain the friar, rushed out of the door, turned the key on the prisoners, and in five minutes after was wandering at large amidst the mazes of the boundless forest.

"This happened in the early spring; days and weeks passed away and embodied themselves into months; the November blast sighed through these long galleries and stripped the yellow leaves from the waving oaks; twilight was fast melting into darkness, and a few detached

and heavy drops, together with the inky blackness of the sky, proclaimed an approaching tempest. Under these inauspicious circumstances, a cavalcade was seen to issue from the portals of this house; it consisted of a closed litter, surrounded by a well-armed party of cavaliers, who, slowly entering the forest, took the road to Castellar. Half an hour had scarcely elapsed since their departure ere the threatened storm burst in all its violence, and amidst the loud peals of thunder, the report of fire-arms was heard echoing through the wood; and shortly after a dying man was carried to the convent gates on his affrighted horse; his remaining strength barely enabling him to state, that scarcely had they entered the thickest part of the wood, when they were surprised at the same moment by the storm, and suddenly beset by a large party of armed men with visors on their

faces, whose leader, whilst the rest were engaged in deadly conflict with the party of the Inquisition, after felling those who had the particular charge of the litter, and disengaging from it the slight form it contained, threw it and himself on his foaming charger, and exclaiming—'Mi vida eres mia para siempre!' dashed down the rocky steep and disappeared amidst the torrents of rain and surrounding darkness.

"'Ever shall I remember the morning following that stormy night,' would continue my worthy confessor. 'To the warfare of the elements had succeeded a perfect calm, and the autumn air had assumed a vernal mildness. The universal theme of conversation amongst the brothers was the rescue of him whom they had known as the Novice, and who, on his way to the dungeons of the Inquisition, had been thus sacrilegiously taken

out of the hands of Mother Church by, it was at once concluded, the proscribed and daring Antonio.'

"Tempted by the fineness of the weather, and absorbed in thoughts arising from the events of the preceding day, the 'confessor' stole from his cell, and wandering amongst the spreading oak and cork trees of the forest, found himself at last on the banks of the Guadranque.* The waters had partially subsided, but

* This mountain torrent, which discharges itself into the Bay of Gibraltar, is affected immediately by any considerable fall of rain, and rolls down a large volume of turbid waters, whose course may be distinguished by the colour to a considerable distance in the "blue" Mediterranean, if Gibraltar Bay can be so called. During the summer season, at the height of the Almoraima, (which is not far from its banks,) it is a mere gurgling brook, whose picturesque sides are overshadowed by the greatest variety of beautiful shrubs and trees; amongst the former of which the oleander and large gum cistus are very conspicuous.

still retained their turbid hue, the result of their conflicting waves on the preceding night, whilst ever and anon the crumbling bank, and the uprooted trunks of the ilex and the oak, or masses of oleander and gum cistus, now floating lazily down the stream, or left at intervals on the wreck-covered shore by the receding waters, bore evidence to the ravages committed by the angry torrent.

"Still the Frāile strolled on, when suddenly his attention was arrested by an object which riveted him to the spot. On a small islet, covered with flowering oleander, in the centre of the stream, and half-buried in the sand, lay a white and indistinct mass. Not able to reach it alone, he returned to the convent for assistance, and on arriving at the place it was found to be, closely locked in each other's arms, the lifeless and lacerated bodies of Antonio and the Novice.

"You see," added the old woman, "had it not been for our Lady of the Almoraïma, on whose protection he undoubtedly threw himself at the time, he would never have been able to carry off the young lady from the midst of the guards and Inquisition."

"Very true, *tia*,"* replied I; "but it appears to me, 'Lastima,' a pity that she should not have extended her aid a little further, and landed them safely on the other side of the Guadranque, instead of drowning the unfortunate couple in its troubled waters like a litter of blind puppies."

"That," replied the old lady, nowise disconcerted, "is easily to be accounted for. Every one knows that our Lady's influence only extends as far as the river,

* "My aunt;" a familiar term very frequently used in Spain in addressing an elderly woman.

after entering which they could no longer count on her assistance; whereas the spot where the affray took place was decidedly under her protection; and I dare say, Hijo, you who are so well acquainted with the whole neighbourhood, know the place, which is at the old wooden cross, nailed against the large oak, just after you cross the brook which, winding round the rock, falls into the Guadranque."

Her description instantly brought the place to my mind's eye; on my way to Castellar I had often noticed it; indeed, its romantic situation would not admit of its escaping the most unobserving traveller. I was aware that, like other mementos in this troubled land, it had marked where some erring soul had for ever taken flight to other and, it is to be hoped, better regions. Still, until I heard the peculiar transactions connected with

the scene, it was devoid of that interest with which the narrative of old Martha henceforth invested it, nor did I ever pass the spot without recalling the "Story of the Novice."

CHAPTER IV.

A DAY'S HOG-HUNTING AT ELLORA—FERTILE PLAINS OF THE UPPER DECCAN—PEAFOWL AND TIGERS—AURUNGABAD—AURUNGZEBE'S MOSQUE—SHAH SAHIB TUKEAH—DOWLUTABAD—ROSAH—PLAINS OF CANDEISH—WONDERS OF ELLORA—ABUNDANCE OF GAME—LACY'S MISFORTUNE—COTTON GROUND—THE LAMPLIGHTER—THE BRAVE PIG—THE FIRST SPEAR—A PURL—THE DEATH—THE FEAST.

"Spears tough and horses healthy,
Beaters active—*pigs* in plenty."

DECCANEE TOAST.

READER, hast ever visited the upper part of the Deccan during the delightful months of December, January, or February—I mean that part extending from Jaulnah towards Aurungabad and Ellora, and bordering on Candeish? If thou hast not,

all my efforts will give but a faint idea of one of the richest and most beautiful countries I ever beheld ; but mind you, I make the proviso that it be in the aforesaid cold season. At that period, the traveller may for miles and miles traverse plains covered with the richest crops, in which barley, Indian corn, tobacco, and the graceful sugar-cane vie with each other in luxuriance ; whilst ever and anon a wheat-field proclaims a more temperate clime than that in the lower parts of the country. The vine likewise grows in this favoured soil, but not to an extent sufficient to supply that generous juice, the solace of the heart of man. Another, and maybe a less harmless, assuager of human woes holds its place ; and the beautiful appearance of large crimson fields of poppies proclaims the presence of the opium-eater—of him who makes unto himself a paradise of this world of woe ! The

bright patches where the red chili is cultivated, plains covered with long waving grass, tenanted by the graceful antelope, the florikan; and bustard, and occasionally broken by a grove of date-trees, imperfectly complete the picture of this garden of nature.

It was in scenes like these that our party, bound to the Everlasting Caves, the great remains of Ellora, daily pitched our tents in the beginning of 183—; and to the advantages of sociability, good fellowship, and such delightful scenery, were added in full perfection the sports of the field.

The barley-fields abounded with that beautiful bird, the painted partridge, as superior in delicacy as it outvies the common one in the brilliancy of its plumage. The large brown quail was the tenant of every cultivated spot; and if we chanced in our perambulations to stroll

along the wooded banks of a nullah overshadowed by flowery shrubs, the sharp whirr of the rising peacock often announced the proximity of larger and more dangerous game, made clearly manifest by the distinctly-marked impressions of the tiger's footsteps, retained on the sandy bed of the watercourse, to warn the traveller of his danger, or excite the adventurous sportsman in his perilous pursuit. It is a remarkable circumstance that wherever pea-fowl abound, the tiger generally lurks in the vicinity: the only way to account for this is, that these animals, so different in disposition and pursuits, are fond of similar localities, as the same depth of foliage which conceals the bird from its enemies serves often to screen its ferocious neighbour from its victim until within reach of the fatal spring.

We rose with the lark, and, after shooting until the heat became unplea-

saut, mounted our horses, and cantered off to the next halting-place, generally fifteen or sixteen miles distant, where a tent and some of our people sent on the night before ensured us shelter from the sun, and a good breakfast, to which we did ample justice, after a previous ablution in one of the many deep and cool *bowries** which are always to be found in the vicinity of the smallest hamlet. With all the parching heat to which India is subject, of water there is seldom a scarcity; *without* it, the climate would often not be endurable.

Forty days spent in this manner, with an occasional halt at any place possessing particular attractions, brought us in sight of the once flourishing city of Aurungabad.

* A *bowrie* is a large well cut in the rocky soil of this elevated part of the country; the descent is by steps, often to a great depth; and the water, even at the warmest season, is always delightfully cool.

This town, which was named after its founder, Aurungzebe, eclipsed for a period the imperial Delhi, and became, during the latter years of that conqueror's reign, the capital of his extensive dominions. But, alas! the hand of decay and neglect, more than the ravages of time, are fast reducing to crumbling ruins and neglected wastes the noble buildings and princely gardens of this pseudo capital of the empire of the Moguls; even the celebrated tomb erected to the daughter, or, as some say, the favourite sultana, of Aurungzebe is undergoing the fate of all sublunary things. One of its marble minars is now scarcely accessible; and unless speedy steps be taken to put a stop to the evil, this noble building, raised on the model of the Taje at Agra, together with the beautiful gardens in which it is situated, will in a few years become the abode of the jackal, hyæna,

and other beasts of the wilderness, with which the surrounding mountains abound.

Amongst the many things worth seeing at Aurungabad is the pretty mosque of the Shah Sahib Tukeah, in the gardens of which is a reservoir of water presenting the unusual spectacle of a living mass of fish, some of a considerable size. These are considered sacred, are daily fed with the greatest care, and from this circumstance have become so tame as to eat crumbs of bread from the hand. Our cicerone gravely assured us that misfortune would inevitably befal any one sacrilegious enough to injure one of their favourite fishes; that some years back, an unusual quantity of rain having caused the tank to overflow, some of the fish were washed into the adjoining road; a poor man passing by took several of them, of which he and his family made a hearty meal; but death and disease were

the consequences of their impiety, till all who had partaken of the forbidden fish went to an untimely grave. Of course we expressed our entire belief in the miracle, and at the same time disclaimed all idea of supping off the *loaves* and *fishes* of the Shah Sahib Tukeah.

Aurungabad is a station for a force of the Nizam's troops, disciplined in the European manner, and commanded by officers in the Company's service; and a more hospitable set of fellows I never met with. Though years have passed away, and I have probably been long forgotten by my worthy friend Dr. Giraud, I am glad to have this opportunity of assuring him, should these lines ever meet his eye, that time has not erased from my memory all his kindness, nor what I may truly call his fatherly care of one of our party, who for weeks was under his roof, and confined to his bed by a dangerous illness.

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Indian hospitality is proverbial, but here it outdoes itself; and as Aurungabad is a complete thoroughfare between the Upper Provinces, Bombay, Hyderabad, and Madras, they have abundant opportunities of exercising this virtue to its full extent, and frequently on extraordinary-looking objects. Men who for years have not seen a European face, whose long residence among the savage Bheels or other tribes on the banks of the Tapty or Nerbuddah has rendered them nearly as wild as their associates, by their remarkable dress and appearance often astonish the "Natives" on their way through this station. An Englishman, after being bronzed by the suns and land-winds of twenty scorching hot seasons, during which he has probably associated principally with the wild tribes amongst which it has been his lot to be thrown, with a beard of many years' growth, and a cos-

tume with few remnants of the European dress, is an object likely to attract attention, but one frequently to be seen here, and always sure of meeting with a kind and friendly reception.

It was not without feelings of regret that we quitted our friends in the cantonment of Aurungabad, and, leaving a high range of hills on our right, made for the far-famed fort of Dowlutabad, or the "Abode of Riches." The fort lies about nine miles to the N.W. of Aurungabad, and is an isolated conical mass of granite, unconnected with any of the neighbouring range of hills, from which it is about two miles distant. The best description can give but a faint idea of this stupendous natural as well as artificial fortification. The reader must imagine a cone rising in an extensive plain, the slopes of which are scarped at some distance from the base, so as to leave a perpendicular wall

of living rock to the height of a couple of hundred feet. The scarping, being continued below the level of the adjoining plain, forms a deep ditch, across which is a moveable narrow bridge leading to an aperture in the perpendicular side of the rock above-mentioned. The aperture is the entrance to a gallery cut in the very heart of the granite, and which can be entered by only one person at a time, and then in a stooping posture. This leads to a vaulted hall, or place of arms, where light is only obtained by torches. The passage continues ascending for about two hundred yards, till it terminates in a second chamber, whence access is had into the fort through an aperture in the ceiling, protected by an iron grating, which in times of danger is covered with a fire, easily kept alight by the draught through the passage acting on it as a bellows. After emerging again into the light of

day, a steep and rugged ascent (during which are passed several tanks cut out of the rock, and well replenished with water) leads to the summit of this extraordinary specimen of what can be effected by the ingenuity of man. Here there is barely room for the flag-staff and for a gun of enormous calibre, placed there by Aurungzebe, and which our guide assured us had before now sent its stone or iron messengers as far as Aurungabad, though, from its rusty and honeycombed appearance, I must confess that were such an experiment tried at present, I should beg to retire to the gallery below.

It was through the kindness of Mr. Martin, the British resident at the court of Hyderabad, that we were enabled to make this visit to Dowlutabad, to which strangers are not admitted without the especial permission of the Nizam. On remitting our *hookum* (order or licence) to

the Kelladar, or commandant of the fort, he sent us all manner of salams, and, what was better, a basket of the finest grapes I ever tasted, the peculiar growth of this place, and which are sent to many parts of India, to the distance of several hundred miles.

We were now rapidly approaching the term of our journey — the Wonders of Ellora! A paved road, up an almost continued ascent of several miles, brought us to the plain on which is situated the village of Rosah, immediately above the Caves. We stopped here for a few minutes to examine the tomb of Aurungzebe: a plain marble slab, with a few officiating fakeers, is all that remains to the memory of the conqueror of India— of him who built palaces and overthrew empires! But we had not time to moralize; so, pushing on a few hundred yards, we reached the pretty Bungalow,

on the very verge of the descent where the excavations are formed, and whence we obtained a splendid view of the plains of Candeish, stretching far and wide at our feet.

We swallowed our breakfast, and lost no time in exploring these wonders of time immemorial, to which, although so many have made the attempt, no pen can render adequate justice. I shall refer the reader, amongst other works on the subject, to Seeley's "Wonders of Ellora;" and the following extract from that author gives some idea of the feelings with which these gigantic specimens of human labour are viewed for the first time by the almost stupified spectator:—

"Bruce's emotions were not more vivid or tumultuous on first beholding the springs of the Nile, than mine were on reaching the temples of Ellora. I at once rushed into the wonders and glories of these immortal works; but it is totally

impossible to describe the feelings of admiration and awe excited in the mind upon first beholding these stupendous excavations. On a close approach to the temples, the eye and imagination are bewildered with the variety of interesting objects that present themselves on every side. The feelings are interested to a degree of awe, wonder, and delight, that at first is painful, and it is a long time before they become sufficiently sobered and calm to contemplate with attention the surrounding wonders. The death-like stillness of the place, the solitude of the adjoining plains, the romantic beauty of the county — the mountain itself, perforated in every part—all tend to impress the mind of the stranger with feelings quite new, and far different from those felt in viewing the most magnificent edifices amidst the busy haunts of man. Everything here invites the mind to contemplation,

and every surrounding object reminds it of a remote period, and a mighty people, who were in a state of high civilization while the natives of our own lands were barbarians, living in woods and wilds.

"Conceive the burst of surprise at suddenly coming upon a stupendous temple, within a large open court, hewn out of the solid rock, with all its parts perfect and beautiful, standing proudly alone upon its native bed, and detached from the neighbouring mountain by a spacious area all around, nearly 250 feet deep and 150 feet broad!—this unrivalled fane rearing its rocky head to a height of nearly 100 feet, its length about 145 feet by 62 feet broad, having well-formed door-ways, windows, and staircases to its upper floors, contains fine large rooms of a smooth and polished surface, regularly divided by rows of pillars; the whole bulk of this immense block of isolated excavation being upwards

of 500 feet in circumference, and, extraordinary as it may appear, having beyond its areas three handsome figure-galleries or verandhas, supported by regular pillars, with compartments hewn out of the boundary scalp containing forty-two curious gigantic figures of the Hindoo mythology. Within the court, and opposite these galleries, stands Keylas the Proud, wonderfully towering in hoary majesty—a mighty fabric of rock, surpassed by no relic of antiquity in the known world."

This description is by no means exaggerated; and though Keylas here mentioned is considered the most stupendous of the excavations, there are many others equally wonderful. The day was intensely hot, but we stopped not until we had explored every recess of the twenty odd caves—from the Adnath to the Dhairwharrah—which extend along upwards of a mile and a half on the face of the hill, or

rather the abrupt slope between the table land on which stands Rosah, and the lower plain, where are situated the temple and village of Ellora, whence the excavations derive their name.

Bent on having our fill of Hindoo antiquities, we resolved to take up our abode in the cave called the Teen Thal, because consisting of three stories; and this we accordingly carried into effect the following day, probably much to the annoyance of the bats and silent deities who for so many centuries had here slumbered undisturbed, at all events, since the villanous attempt of Aurungzebe to rouse them from their dreams.* Here, though the atmosphere was close in the extreme, and the smell, and fluttering of the bats

* Aurungzebe, in the true spirit of Mahometanism, is said to have unsuccessfully attempted the destruction of these remains of Hindoo worship by filling them with straw, which was then ignited, and also by directing cannon against them.

very disagreeable, we persuaded ourselves that we were extremely comfortable, enjoyed at night the most sombre horrors of the scene, and, during the first five or six days, were indefatigable with our pencils and portfolios. But, alas! the fine arts were then destined to receive a sad overthrow. At the expiration of that period we were apprised of the arrival of a party of sportsmen from Bombay, by the reception of the present of a magnificent boar's head, together with a polite note, requesting us to dine with them that evening, and join them in their sport on the following morning—the princely chase of the wild boar to be the day's amusement. To keen sportsmen this appeal was irresistible: we cast aside the pencil, poised the spear, and the next morning saw us start in company with our friends the *Ducks*,*

* A Bengalee has the nick-name of *Qui Hy*; the Madrassites are called *Mulls*, from their fond-

who appeared devilish good fellows. They were all better mounted and appointed than ourselves, but for the credit of the *Mulls* we resolved to "do or die" in getting a first spear.

The party, consisting of six, after swallowing an early breakfast, left the village of Ellora, where our new allies had taken up their quarters, and, accompanied by as many beaters as we could muster, skirted the bottom of the hills to the north, in order to cut off our game from their mountain fastnesses. Never did I behold a country so abounding in game of every description. As the beaters proceeded, they put up birds and beasts of every kind, from the pea-fowl to the quail, and

ness for *mullagatawny*; whilst the Bombay man is denominated a *Duck*, from, I believe, a small fish caught off that part of the coast, which are called "ducks," and which, being dried, are sent to all parts of India.

from the neel-guy (or "blue-cow," a very large species of deer) to the beautiful small goat-antelope, which, as it went gracefully bounding off with impunity, often made us regret that we were not provided with our rifles instead of the spear.

As we were near the hills, the ground, covered with low jungle, was much broken by watercourses, often so deep and abrupt as to be impassable. We were beating along the bank of one of these, Lacy alone being separated from the rest of the party by a ravine which at this spot it was impossible to cross: an enormous boar suddenly sprang up immediately under his horse's nose, which, to the great amusement of the "Ducks," turned tail and went off at full speed in the opposite direction, much to the annoyance of his rider. But it was the first time the brute had seen a *doker*, (the Hindostanee for wild hog,) and this was such a formidable look-

ing fellow that there might be some excuse for his being in a bit of a funk. We, however, came to the conclusion that we were too near the hills to have any chance of a spear on such break-neck ground, and accordingly, throwing forward the right of our skirmishers, we felt our way towards the plains.

The sun was beginning to ride high in the heavens and to be scorching hot, and a feeling of despondency began to pervade the party, when both riders and steeds were put on their mettle by the reiterated cries of the head shikaree, (and God knows he had been brawling enough all the morning,) "Dekho, Sahib! dekho! dokeran, dokeran!" ("See, Sir! see! hogs, hogs!")—and our optics were indeed gladdened by the noble sight of a fine *sounder* (herd of wild hog) breaking covert and scouring along the plain. It is always a rule to single out and ride at the largest

boar in the herd: some of them attain an enormous bulk, which, however, considerably abates their speed, but amongst our present friends there were no such corpulent gentlemen. The largest ones appeared to belong to Pharaoh's lean kine—thin, flat-sided, and leggy—and promising to try the best paces of our nags; nor was this promise belied. Away we started, cotton-ground to begin with, and of the worst description—dry and cracked, with deep fissures, into which if a horse got his leg, the chances were that he would come on his nose; but the Lamplighter knew a trick worth two of that, and crossed the ugly spot at the top of his speed, and without accident. I had marked for my prey a fine long-legged grunter, who went over the ground like the devil in a gale of wind. What became of my companions I neither knew nor cared: methought at one time that I saw

a fine grey horse, which was nearest to me at the start, rolling over a "Duck," but I only remembered their *quacking* in the morning at Lacy's misfortune, and gave my little dun an extra taste of the Brummagem: he answered it bravely. We were now off the infernal cotton-ground, and bowling along over pretty level country at a killing pace—a pace which I knew could not last. My long-legged friend seemed to think so likewise: he suddenly changed his course, fortunately for me, to the right, and made for the hills. I say fortunately, as thereby two of the best mounted of the Bombayites, who had kept to the left of the cotton-ground in hopes of a good cast, were thrown out: for although I put every dependence on the pluck and bottom of the Lamplighter, *still* I must confess I thought the noble Arabs my competitors were mounted on *might* be too much for him.

But this unfortunate turn saved *his* bacon, though it had quite another effect on friend doker: he, however, succeeded in getting amongst the watercourses and nullahs near the foot of the hills, when, although hard pressed, I am fain to acknowledge he had the best of me. Still I urged on the Lamplighter, the more so as I saw my two friends of the cotton-field fast making up their leeway. We had to cross not only dry nullahs, but several brooks; and piggy, who began to feel rather "gurum" (warm), invariably would lie down in these *en passant*. He thus lost much valuable time, and I at last winded him so completely, that he stopped suddenly, put his hinder parts into a bush, and turned to bay. I relied on the Lamplighter not being so completely beat but that he would answer the helm, and accordingly made a charge at my grim antagonist, who was eyeing me with foaming

mouth, blood-shot eyes, and bristles erect, even like those of the "fretful porcupine."

The pig was a brave pig, and awaited not my attack, but with the prelude of a most unmusical grunt made a dart at me. The *little* dun was *greatly done;* and before I could turn him, received a wound in the flank, and the next second I saw the monster's snout over my shoulder. I was horribly *afear'd*, but escaped unscathed: piggy again took to his trotters, and I after him.

The two "Ducks" were now close at my heels, and screwing hard for the first spear. The doker was evidently on his last legs, and our nags could scarce raise a canter. A lift with bit and spur was tried, nor tried in vain: the Lamplighter answered it: another stride brought me alongside the enemy, and my spear head was buried in his ribs. On feeling

the steel, he suddenly turned to charge, and in so doing he lifted me out of the saddle: I flew over my horse's head, and was dashed motionless on the ground, a few paces from the infuriated animal, with the broken shaft of the spear in my hand, the violence of the shock having severed it within a few inches of the ferrule, which remained firmly planted in the monster's back. I now thought it was all *up* with me, for I was too much *shuck* to move. He made one or two strides towards me—I fancied I already felt his burning breath in my face, and his tushes in my small ribs: but the wound he had received was mortal, and baffled his revenge: he suddenly staggered, fell over on his side, and with something between a grunt and a groan gave up the ghost.

My Bombay friends had come up, shaken me into life again, and by the time the rest of the party joined us I was ready

for another lark. But our prads had had enough for the day. We returned slowly to Ellora, and, surrounded as we were by Infidels, proved ourselves on that evening good Christians, and much edified our Mahomedan followers by washing down the unclean beast with bumpers of rosy claret.

CHAPTER V.

THE CANTONMENT OF SECUNDERABAD — SOCIETY AT SECUNDERABAD — AMUSEMENTS — THE SPORTING COMMANDING OFFICER — OLD MAC'S STUD — TRICKS OF ARAB HORSEDEALERS — MOWLH-ALI RACES.

" Rude am I in speech,
And little blest with the set phrase of peace;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now, some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest action in the *tented field*."—

OTHELLO.

SOME few years ago, the Cantonment of Secunderabad was certainly the pleasantest quarter I was ever stationed at. The subsidiary force which occupied it consisted of a large body of troops—I think, four or five regiments of native infantry,

a European battalion, horse and foot artillery, and a regiment of light cavalry. If to these be added the Nizam's troops at Bolarum, at the distance of five miles, who were, or professed to be, disciplined according to Torrens, and commanded by officers in the Company's service, we could at any time muster between 6000 and 7000 men, with all the "pomp and circumstance of war." Besides this, the station of Jaulnah, or, as it was denominated, "The Light Field Division of the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force," was under the orders of our Commandant, making it, on the whole, one of the most extensive and desirable commands in India.

Whence Secunderabad (literally meaning the abode of Alexander) derived its nomenclature I could never ascertain. It is usually called by the natives Houssain Saugur, from its vicinity to a large artificial lake of that name, and is more fre-

quently known by them as the *Lushkur*, or camp, which was, in fact, its original form when first established in 1798 to protect the Nizam against his Mahratta foes. However, John Company finding it answer his purpose to keep up a force whose expenses were defrayed by his friends, the camp by degrees assumed the appearance of a straggling town: barracks and places of arms were constructed: the officers' tents, first covered in during the rains with matting or thatched roofs, by degrees assumed their present appearance, though many of them retain to this day the shape of the canvass tenement on which they were first moulded: and a large town has insensibly sprung up on the rocky and barren spot, which some years ago was only tenanted by the cheetah and jackal, who, even to this day, leaving the shelter of their rocks, frequently wander through the roads and

streets of the Cantonment during the hours of darkness.

We have now (or rather *had*, for I know not what alteration the march of intellect may have made in a few years) in this once "tented field," public and private edifices of all kinds, spacious barracks, hospitals, a library, freemasons' lodge, mess houses, public rooms and theatre, a racket court—in fact, all that can satisfy the wants, and administer to the amusement of the most fastidious. The Cantonment may, in fact, be said to consist of four distinct stations, of which it is the centre, the radii extending from four to six miles. In the first place, close to the city of Hyderabad, and near the banks of the Moussa, which washes its walls, is the residency, the magnificent abode of the representative of British power at the court of the Nizam. Next, at three miles to the north of Secunderabad, is Boam-

pilly, the cavalry station; and about a league in a more westerly direction lies Bolarum, at which are stationed the Nizam's troops.

In so large a force, where all were inclined to be on friendly terms, there was no lack of society and amusement, and, in fact, whatever were a man's pursuits, he was sure to find full employment for them. To the indolent and voluptuous, the hookah, with the accompaniment of a novel, was an interminable source of delight, whilst lolling on a couch, under the cool influence of a cuscus tatty, he could alternately read and smoke, and smoke and sleep, with all the delights which the Prophet holds out to the faithful in his seventh heaven.

The tiffin hunter or the lady's man was quite at home: he might kill every day in the week, a dozen ladies or dinners per diem, to say nothing of

horses, if he chose to call on his different acquaintances at the four different Cantonments. I well knew a jovial little fellow who used to boast that he kept three horses in constant work, and ate regularly every day three tiffins, or dinners, to say nothing of breakfasts, stray suppers, and occasionally a *second* supper and a grill to wind up with.

The man of letters had abundant scope; for, independent of a large and well-stocked library, he might from morn to evening pore over, with the assistance of his Moonshee, learned works in Hindoostannee, Persian, or Arabic, from the Char Durvaish or Tuti Nameh to the Koran; or, if particularly ambitious, might try to penetrate the inexplicable mysteries of the Sanscrit mythology.

The sportsman—but oh! 'twas the paradise of the sportsman!—he might ride out in the morning and bag his couple of

antelope, or, sallying forth with his grey-hounds, return in triumph with a brace or two of brushes, or knock over quail by dozens, and snipe by twenties, ay! and without sleeping out of his own bed or dining from his own mess.

Then we had two or three very good billiard tables—a public one kept by a Parsee,* called Bomanjee, who likewise retailed goods and chattels of every description,—nankeen, regulation swords, broad-cloth, hookahs, brandy, and rose-water—all were to be had at his emporium. Poor old Bomanjee! often do I recall thy jovial rubicund phiz. If thou wert not in reality a guebre, a Parsee, a fire-worshipper, truly thou deservedst to be one, for with thy shining countenance thou wert a very second Bardolph!—the most amiable of duns, the wittiest of cheats, presenting

* The Parsees are descendants of the ancient Persians, and are Guebres, or fire-worshippers.

thy bills with a smile and joke, and having always a repartee at hand on receiving part payment, or, what was more frequently the case, on not receiving any at all.

Neither were our racket-court or public-rooms to be scorned. Our balls could boast a plentiful sprinkling of beauty; and though the parterre were not always entirely composed of roses and lilies, still, if a yellow-faced *primrose* or dusky dahlia occasionally sprang up amidst their fairer sisters, they only shewed them off to advantage, like ivory set in ebony.

Our dramatic performances and performers were likewise good in their way. We certainly occasionally would convert tragedy into comedy, and the latter to a farce. A *Lydia Languish has* certainly appeared on the stage as if (mind, I only say "as if") a *leetle* the worse for liquor, and

looking for all the world as if she had at some period of her life worn a beard. But then it was out of the hum-drum-every-day-Covent-Garden-and-Drury-Lane-way of doing the thing, made us laugh, and amusement, not criticism, was our object.

If to all this be added that we had at our head the kindest-hearted and most generous fellow in the world, whose purse and house were always open to his friends, and whose board groaned under his hospitality—(alas! Colonel Ogilvie is no more, and no interested motive can now actuate me in thus recording his merits!)—that our resident* was courteous to all, princely in his entertainments, and unbounded in his expense—that in old *Arab Mac* we had for commandant of the force a stanch sportsman, and one always ready to promote sport—it will hardly be matter of surprise, if, with a good climate, good al-

* W. Byam Martin, Esq.

lowances, and all "appliances and means to boot," I should still consider the time spent at Secunderabad as the happiest of my life.

But a word *en passant* touching Arab Mac: he was indeed a *rum'un* and no mistake; and although I will not call him *names*, all who have been in India will easily recognise the old boy. Ye gods! I see him at this moment coming into church—first, taking off the extraordinary mis-shapen piece of pasteboard and oil skin which did duty as a forage cap; next, smoothing down his silvery locks, whilst his clear blue eye appeared to take in all around him at a glance; then the jacket! it must have been made by a carpenter, for it fits like a sentry box; the coarse grey inexpressibles to match; but no, they don't match, for I remember they were rather *taut* on his shrivelled old shanks, and are turned up

with a pair of Hessian boots, which look as if they had been bought second-hand at some fisherman's *outcry*: then the sword —what on earth has the old cock got it fastened to his belt with! by the powers of Moll Kelly, 'tis a *curb chain*, ay, a curb chain! and none of the brightest. And now the old gentleman takes his seat, and sits immoveable through an interminable sermon, thinking intently of his chance for the next maiden, for the Arab horse-dealers have come from Bombay, and he has just had his pick from a large lot.

The service is at an end—let us see the old man home: a curious-looking vehicle is drawn up at the church-door; it *must* be the turn-out of some rascally half-caste, which is thus stopping the way. But the horse—if that nag cost one cowrie, fifteen hundred rupees must have been laid out on him: but yet see what hang-dog har-

ness and traps the beautiful creature is disfigured with! and the *bandy* (*Anglicè*, a gig), it is positively worse than the one belonging to the stingy old Welsh Doctor (another of our characters), who renovates his old cocked hat by pasting fresh nap on it; dines every day on pigeon curry, because he breeds pigeons; and rubs his head with rancid butter, to save his hair, at the expense (no, not at the expense) of Macassar oil. However, the short and long of it is, that this crazy vehicle does belong to Arab Mac, C.B., commanding the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force, and the L.F.D.H.S.F. to boot, and, moreover, in the receipt of some 4000 rupees per month! Let us get up behind, and, as I before proposed, accompany the Chief to his own home, where we will suppose ourselves safely deposited; and, from the nature of the conveyance, *that* is almost a matter of conjecture.

But what the devil have we here! an

encampment of Tartars, or horse-dealers, or itinerant tinkers, with their donkeys and luggage? Oh! no; only a few of Mac's smaller craft: all these rough and shaggy-looking ponies are each excellent in some way or other, and some day the old fox will take in a griffin or two with them: that wall-eyed brute has won some half dozen trotting matches; that thick-shouldered, broken-knee'd devil can carry twelve stone twice round Mowlh-Ali Course; and, in fact, they all possess some qualification to entitle them to the high honour of wearing head and heel ropes in the compound (yard or enclosure) of the Chief. But before you venture in, I hope you have no objection to be weighed, for with your slight form you are sure to figure in the scales as soon as you are introduced to him. All this may appear rather Transatlantic, but, as far as I can recollect, I am not over-colouring the picture.

On entering the ante-room, you see it

occupied on every side by chucklers (i. e., cobblers and saddlers) and Mootchee men, some repairing halters, others stuffing saddles, the General seated very complacently in the midst of them, perhaps, examining the quality of some Bengal gram, of which there is a large heap in one corner, the others being adorned with the scales, weights, and measuring standard. If already acquainted, he would probably ask you to sit down in the *family circle*, amidst the cobblers; if a stranger, you were ushered into another room, adorned with all the paraphernalia of the racing stud, the conversation generally opening with the leading question as to whether you had seen *Sheriffe*, *Esterhazy*, or some of his crack horses, with a proposal to accompany you to his stables. There everything was in apple-pie order, under the superintendence of Bul, his head groom and jockey, a half-

caste, whom some of his good-natured friends used to say could boast of *Arab* blood out of a pretty female grass-cutter. Be that as it may, Bul always had his stables in high order; and as old Mac's horses, galloways, and ponies, from Sheriffe to Ragged Bill, were in training about the time of the Spring Meetings; as he had generally between seventy and eighty of one sort or another; and as Bul was the only person he entrusted with their education, he, the said Bul, must have worn out a few pair of leather breeches in the course of his vocation.

Old Mac certainly, in spite of inflicting so much hard riding on him, treated him always with the greatest kindness, which Bul repaid very badly, as he left the *father* of the Indian Turf in order to enlist under the banners of George ——, and take charge of his racing stud. Poor George! he also, with old Mac and several other

choice spirits, ranks now amongst those who *have been:* he little thought, when he became the purchaser of Emilius for the long sum of ten thousand rupees, that *his* race was so nearly run, and at the early age of twenty-five! Old Mac, different from most of the racing characters in this part of India, who generally confine themselves to horses of Arab breed, had animals of every caste and description, his first-rates being of course all pure Arabian. These horses are generally brought from the Gulf to Bombay once a-year—the *Ducks* (Bombayites) have of course the first pick—whence they travel South. As they only passed two or three stations before reaching Hyderabad, we generally had a tolerably large batch to choose from; and in doing so, as much circumspection is necessary as at Tattersall's or Dycer's. A horse-dealer is the same all over the world, from the bogs of Ireland to the deserts of Arabia.

I will merely mention, *en passant*, one instance of knowledge of his craft in an Arab horse-dealer. A friend of mine had a very old horse, which he exchanged for one out of a lot, giving a handsome difference. A day or two after, I happened to be examining the horses which had lately arrived, immediately recognised my friend *Bottle*, and merely remarked, "He must be a very old horse." The dealer was quite indignant; swore he was not only a Nedjdee,* but one of very high caste, and, moreover, only rising six! in confirmation of which he requested me to examine his mouth, when, to my utter astonishment, I found his teeth had been filed down and *bishoped* with the greatest neatness and perfection.

Moreover, the horses which are exported to India, although universally dignified with the name of Nedjdee, or desert

* The Nedjdee is considered the most ancient and purest breed of horses in Arabia.

breed, are neither more nor less than a very inferior description of animal in their native land (in the interior of Arabia), where they are employed as beasts of burden to carry dates to the coast, after which they are generally shipped off for the Indian market, and sold at enormous prices.

A fresh horse, however small or of however mean appearance, can seldom be purchased out of an Arab lot under 500 rupees—in fact, after taking into consideration the risk and expenses of embarkation, those of the march, &c., the dealer must originally purchase them at extremely low prices to be enabled to dispose of them to advantage, even on these terms.

The Persian horse may frequently be had at a lower rate. He is a fine shaped, showy animal, well calculated for a charger, but generally too heavy for the

field or the turf. The small Mahratta horse is an active, serviceable little beast, though, in ten cases out of twenty, extremely vicious, but will often make a capital hunter; in fact, being the only horse bred in India that is worth his keep, the larger horses from Hindoostan being merely adapted for the capering of a native Souwarree; they are leggy, under-limbed, and, as far as vice goes, regular man-eaters. Those from Guzerat and Cutch are certainly endowed with greater amiability of disposition, but more calculated for purposes of display and parade than anything else. The natives are very partial to this breed, and give long prices for them, frequently as much as two and three thousand rupees. They blow them out to an enormous size by feeding them on a composition which must be anything but agreeable to the palate of the horse—viz., a kind of paste made of pounded

grain and sheep's head, wherewith the poor devil is crammed like a turkey. The end of the flowing tail, generally reaching the ground, is dyed of a deep red colour; a cruelly sharp bit is put in his mouth; he is buried under a ton of clothing, covered with crimson cloth, doing duty for saddle; and, thus caparisoned, he is deemed fit to carry one of the "Pillars of the State." It is a pretty sight to see a *Souwarree*, or procession, accompanied by a cavalcade thus mounted, and taking every opportunity of displaying their horsemanship—a cavalier occasionally darting from the crowd at the top of his speed, and as suddenly pulling his horse on his haunches in the midst of his headlong career; then wheeling about, and, still at full gallop, describing, in an incredibly small space, the difficult figure of 8, with all the apparent ease of a graceful skaiter.

Hydcrabad, being so central a situation, was generally a great mart for horses from every part; and, in addition to those already enumerated, great numbers annually came from the remote provinces of Belluchistan, Afghan, and Cabul.

Every year, after the rains, these remote provinces poured forth their uncouth and savage looking races both of men and horses; the former in appearance the dirtiest and wildest of beings, both they and their animals looking as if just reclaimed from the steppes of Tartary, from which, by-the-bye, they are not far distant. One peculiarity of these horses is, the extraordinary manner in which many of them are marked, particularly those from Cabul — piebalds of every shade and hue, many spotted like a leopard, and, in one or two instances, I have seen them streaked like the royal tiger. They resemble, in this peculiarity

of colour, the pretty little Acheen and Pegu ponies imported from the Burmese Empire, and so much made use of at Madras in the draught of palankeen carriages.

During all seasons—hot or cold, wet or dry—these horses are never under shelter. This is likewise the case with all the horses belonging to the cavalry in the Madras Presidency, which are always picketed in the open air, and do not, if we may judge from the few casualties, appear to suffer in consequence. The most prevalent diseases are gripes and weakness in the loins. When a horse contracts this last disease, he is said to have a "stroke of the land-winds;" but whether this be the cause of it or not, I have remarked that it is often accompanied by a malady, I believe peculiar to India—"the worm in the eye." How the animal *gets* there is more than I can say; but I can

vouch to have seen it repeatedly. I had a horse which had undergone the operation of having it removed; and although he escaped weakness in the loins, he lost the sight of his eye.* *

But this dissertation has led me from old Arab Mac and his peculiarities. The first thing he did on assuming the command at Hyderabad was to form a race-course on the spot, the one hitherto in use being five or six miles distant, on a large plain near the holy hill of Mowlh-Ali. Here he every morning superintended the training of some twenty or thirty horses, at the expense of Bul's *leathers*.

The Mowlh-Ali course was reserved

* For a descriptive account of this disease, and the system of cure adopted, see a valuable paper on the subject, by Major Gwatkin, Superintendent of the E. I. Company's Stud at Bengal, in the *Sporting Magazine*, Second Series, vol. i. p. 331.

for the grand occasion of the races, to which we always looked forward with pleasure. As soon as all the reviews, inspections, &c. were over, and the business of the year concluded, that of old Mac commenced:—i. e., "The Races." The Cantonment was deserted—a canvas city arose on the Mowlh-Ali plain—stables were erected for the studs of the racing part of the community—a *table-d'hôte* was established at the Stand—discipline was shoved out of the coach—fun and frolic took up the reins, and we went gaily round the course of pleasure at every pace and in every shape.

"The earlier part of the morning was generally spent by those interested, in superintending the last trainings. Then there was always a good breakfast at the Stand, or in some fellow's tent—true Indian breakfasts: lots of curries, stews, poached eggs, and other substantial things

to fortify the inward man, and render him equal to all the fatigues of a day's quail or snipe-shooting; for both were to be had in plenty. Then at 3 P.M. the most savory smells, wafted by the breeze through the different tents, announced the grand operation of the day's "tiffin."

And now you might see chokrahs, maty boys, aubdars, and hookah-burdars, all alive and kicking like a bag of fleas; the former skying along (camp fashion) with their master's chair, tumbler, and plate, in order to secure for "Sahib" a good berth; the man of saltpetre up to the elbows in Hodgson, claret, and champagne;* whilst the old hookah-burdar, a symbol of gravity, is skilfully arranging all his apparatus for the conclusion of the

* The aubdar, or wine-cooler, is in India a regular profession, and some are so expert, that a few turns in the saltpetre-tub in the hottest weather are sufficient to render the wine of a delicious coolness.

feast, when *his* science of perfume and smoke comes into play. This is the time for the *knowing cove* to make his matches, bets, and book his victims whilst under the influence of the rosy god. Even old Mac, though *a deep file*, was sometimes *inveigled* into an unwary race on these occasions, and I have seen him before now, ride himself, and win an "after-tiffin" match in first-rate style.

Quoits, pony and hack races, generally filled up the time till dark, when *brandy-pawnee* and brag were the order of the night; or if perchance it were a Mahomedan feast, a party would stroll to the Holy Mountain, a huge and frowning mass of black granite crowned with a mosque, on the spot where Mahomed is said to have rested on his way to heaven. Here on a festival crowds of people were assembled from Hyderabad, elephants, hackeries, dancing girls, and all the appen-

dages of an eastern procession. It was a pretty sight to see the pilgrims swarming up the steep rock on their hands and knees, with every appearance of devotion; and pleasant to stroll through the beautiful gardens at the foot of the rock, amidst the numerous and elegant tombs with which, I had almost said, they were adorned; for in the East more trouble and taste are lavished on the abodes of the departed than on those of the living. And an hour passed amidst these mementos of affection, during the stillness of a tropical night, and under the luxuriant foliage of a tropical climate—the spreading banyan, the graceful areca-tree, or stately tamarind—would occasionally act as a wholesome sedative to the mind, after all the excitement, noise, and bustle of the day.

Thus did our time pass until the eventful days on which the great cups were

run for; and it was a pleasant time—too pleasant ever to return.

I regret not having noted in my log the names of the horses, and their respective rates of going, at the last Mowlh-Ali races which old Mac superintended. Some of the best horses on the Indian turf of that day were entered and ran; and the names of Sheriffe, Esterhazy, Dreadnought, were familiar as household terms. I remember also two famous galloways, Feramoz and Little Tough, and that wonderful little devil *Diable*, under 13 hands high, who could do his half-mile in fifty-six seconds.

Sheriffe was a beautiful bay Arab with black points, and a tail which actually trailed on the ground. Old Mac was recommended to *curtail* it as an improvement on his appearance. "No," said he; "Sheriffe shall never lose his tail as long as he can shew it to every horse which is brought against him." Such was the old

fellow's affection for this noble animal that, on Sheriffe's death, which happened soon after, he kept his hoofs, legs, and, I believe, every part that would admit of being preserved; and the *tail* was sent to a lady of rank in England, as the most valuable present (in his opinion) which he could offer, though she probably had the bad taste to prefer a handsome Cashmere shawl or Chinese work-box.

Although I did not keep any memorandum of the time &c. at our Mowlh-Ali races, I annex the following abstract from the Madras papers of their races for January, 1832, in order to give the fire-side reader some idea of what our little nags can do in India, always bearing in mind that they are seldom much above 14 hands, or galloway height.

The First Maiden Subscription Prize, three miles, 8st. 4lb., won by Mr. Fox's Nightshade in a canter—time, 6m. 20s.

Second Maiden, 8st. 7lb., won by Mr. Fox's Cloudesley—time, first heat, 4m. 10s.; second heat, 4m. 12s.

Sweepstakes for all Arabs, 9st., two miles and a half, won by Mr. Fox's Agonista—time, 5m. 5s.

His Highness the Nabob's Cup for all Arabs, 9st., three miles, won by Mr. Fox's Salonica—time, first half mile, 55s.; total, 6m. 24s., cantering.

Third Maiden, 8st. 10lb., one mile and a half, won by Major Looney's Mountebank—time, first heat, 3m. 2s.; second heat, 3m. 10s.

Sweepstakes, 8st. 8lb., 2 miles, won by Mr. Fox's Harmonica—time, 3m. 39s.

As a proof of the speed and bottom of our little Arabs, it is recorded in the *Sporting Magazine* for June, 1838, p. 103, by Major Gwatkin, Superintendent of the Hon. East India Company's Stud at Bengal, that at the last Meerut Race Meeting,

Mr. G. Bacon's Faustus, an Arab gelding, 14-1, ran three miles over the Round Course, (very sandy and unlike the springy turf of Old England,) winning the Gold Cup *very easily* by twenty lengths (the last half-mile a stiffish hill,) in 6m. 7s.—the first two miles in 3m. 59s.

CHAPTER VI.

A MOONLIGHT NIGHT IN THE JUNGLE — MOWLH-ALI HILL — GAME IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD — VULTURE SHOOTING — BAIT FOR A TIGER — HINDOO GIRLS — INGENIOUS TRAP — THE CAGED CHEETAH — THE HUNTING CHEETAH — THE NAUTCH.

"The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
The devil's in the moon for mischief! they
Who call'd her *chaste*, methinks, began too soon
Their nomenclature."

BYRON.

In my last, I mentioned the sacred hill of Mowlh-Ali, with its processions, pilgrims, splendid tombs, and shady groves, the whole crowned by a gorgeous building erected over the spot where the *Peighambur*, the holy prophet, for the last time left the print of his foot ere he de-

parted to the realms of bliss, after a life of deception, rapine, and murder, after spreading his doctrines far and wide, carving his way with the scimitar, and illuminating his bloody course by the sight of flaming cities and burning fields—but God is great, and, *Inshah Allah o Talah*, by his assistance we will quit the footsteps of man, marked by ambition, avarice, and self-interest, and get on the scent of the hyænas, cheetahs, jackals, and vultures, with which, as well as with holy relics, the sacred hill abounds.

Mowlh-Ali is a three-headed monster of a rock, abruptly rearing its dark and frowning masses out of the bosom of an extensive plain, thickly studded with the beautiful shrub of the custard apple, often so grateful to the parched mouth of the weary sportsman. The hills are composed of three masses of black granite, on the most northerly of which is the mosque

above-mentioned; the gardens, tombs, &c. are also spread at its base. The two other elevations are completely deserted except by wild beasts. On the centre rock is a Hindoo place of worship, presenting, from its abandoned and lonely appearance, its simple and massive architecture, which has resisted the unsparing hand of Time, and the still more unsparing hand of Mahomedanism, a strong contrast to the gorgeous display and elaborate ornaments of its Moorish opponents. On viewing thus at one glance monuments of creeds, which, in our belief, are equally erroneous, and which for ages past have been the cause of the effusion of torrents of blood—always shed in the sacred name of *Religion*—what food does it not afford to the moralist? But *that* is not our vocation. Hal therefore *revenons à nos moutons*, or rather *à notre gibier*, and let us conclude what appears to be this interminable description

of Mowlh-Ali, which *does* terminate in a confused chaos of masses of granite, piled in every form, and placed in every direction—some towering to the skies, and appearing as if a breath of air only were requisite to prostrate them in the dust amidst their more humble brethren—the whole presenting to the eye of the spectator a scene which he might be led to imagine could only have been caused by some violent convulsion of nature.

The interstices and crevices between this jumbled mass of rocks are the abodes of numberless jackals, hyænas, cheetahs, foxes, and porcupines; whilst the inaccessible points of the bare and towering masses afford a secure place of refuge to the vulture, who here, unmolested by man or beast, can in safety rear his hungry brood. This part of the hill was a favourite resort of mine, and I long unsuccessfully attempted, both by night and

day, to *sar*cumvent its savage inhabitants. The low jungle at the foot of the rock afforded capital quail shooting, and once or twice when thus engaged I had seen, on a jutting ledge above me, a fine cheetah, or leopard, luxuriously basking in the morning sun, which he almost shamed by the brilliant hues of his spotted coat; but ere I could complete the operation of slipping a ball over the charge of shot, or taking up a position from which I might get a crack at him, he invariably disappeared in one of the numerous chasms, and all search proved ineffectual. The same with the porcupines, of the existence of which I had evident proofs, by frequently finding their quills whilst scrambling amongst the rocks. Then those confounded vultures! from the tops of the natural obelisks of huge upright masses of granite, where they had established their eyries, I could distinctly hear the cries of the young, but so closely

did the rascals lie that I could not even get the sight of a feather to serve as a mark; or if ever I got a peep at the old *uns*, it was long before I was within gun-shot, even of a twenty-four pounder, when, with a hideous scream, they would spread their huge wings, and gradually soar out of sight.

That hyænas *were* to be found I was also sure, from a little spaniel belonging to a friend who was taking his morning's ride close to the rock having been carried off. *He*, poor man! who did not know a tiger cat from a royal tiger, imagining the assault to have been committed by one of the latter, and not deeming himself perfectly safe in such a neighbourhood, put spurs to his horse, and never pulled bit till he arrived quite breathless at my door to relate the dreadful occurrence.

With all these "damning proofs," I was for some time indefatigable in my pursuit:

morning, noon, and the cool shades of eve saw me like a troubled spirit wandering about this cursed rock, but still without success. At last, wearied with my unsuccessful efforts by day, I was determined to try what starry night might do in my favour, and by the light of the first bright moon I was again gliding amongst my now familiar acquaintances, the Mowlh-Ali rocks. I crept gently up every well-known chasm, remained concealed in breathless excitement, on the full cock, the finger ready on the trigger, near every likely chink in the rock which might possibly conceal an enemy, but still without avail. In this manner, and keeping as much as possible in the shadows thrown by the huge masses of granite, I reached the bottom of one of the perpendicular blocks, where I had reason to believe were some of my feathered foes. I looked aloft: could I be mistaken? but no; 'twas the grey breast of one of the old

vultures shining brightly in the rays of the moon. Prepared for every contingency, I had one barrel loaded with large swan drops. It was the affair of a second to bring my eye, the piece of white paper* which covered the sight, and the opposing object in a line, to draw the trigger, and in breathless expectation watch the effect of my shot as the bird first rose into the air, and then suddenly turning over, fell and fell, until the projecting shadows of the rocky eminence hid him from my sight; but I was guided by the sound, for presently a tremendous crash informed me he was safely *floored*. I scrambled down the rocks at rather a quicker and less silent pace than that at which I had ascended, and after a short search found

* It is a good plan in shooting by night to have something white placed at the muzzle of the piece, over the sight—a piece of paper, rag, or putty answers the purpose.

my victim. I dragged him into the moonshine—carrying the enormous brute was out of the question—and I seldom saw a finer bird: his wings, as far as I can recollect, were upwards of eight feet from tip to tip; and what I also perfectly remember was the intolerable stench which exhaled from him, and which convinced me, had I not been so already by his bare fleshy neck, of his being a genuine *vulture* of the true genus. I was quite satisfied with my night's sport, and dragging it in the best way I could towards the mangoe tope, where my horse and the faithful Chennou were awaiting me, I gladly consigned it to his charge, and, mounting Lamplighter, was, within an hour, in the arms of sleep, and dreaming of vultures, cheetahs, and hyænas.

My success with the vulture encouraged two or three brother sportsmen to make another night attack on the hill, and it

was accordingly resolved that the following evening, whenever the moon arose, we should try our four-legged friends on another tack,—viz., by remaining in ambush, and endeavour to inveigle them out of their fastnesses by the engrossing argument of a kid fastened to a stake, and, moreover, made eloquent by a piece of whipcord attached to its ear, which whipcord was gently jerked whenever kiddy became sulky and silent.

Now it so happened that the moon on the night in question did not rise till a late hour, and, to pass the time until her Chastity should be pleased to open the port-holes of her eyes, we had a late dinner, and sate still later after dinner, talking, and probably drinking a little—people *will* drink a little in that hot climate—so that by the time we thought of mounting our horses we were perhaps a *leetle* elevated. This is to apologize for

what follows, for surely *sober* sportsmen could never have been guilty of such an act. Scarcely had we got half way through the Cantonment when we met some native damsels. God knows what they were doing *there* at that time of night! perhaps they might *have been* vestals returning from a sacrifice to Diana or some other Hindoo divinity. Scarce could you say Jack Robinson ere each dusky fair one (and I fear me no less frail than smutty) was seated on the saddle *bow* with her respective *beau*, and, like a second rape of the Sabines, off we cantered to Mowlh-Ali, our horse-keepers following as best they might with our fowling-pieces, kid, boat-cloaks, &c.

On arriving at the ground, we held a consultation, in which it was unanimously agreed that one man awake was better for cheetah or hyæna shooting than four

sleeping ones; that, therefore, one of us at a time should mount guard over the kid, and be relieved every two hours. We cast lots for the honour of first tour of duty; it fell to B.; he fastened the kid in an open space, and took post behind a thick custard apple bush. Begging he would not fail to call the next relief in two hours, we took our leave, paired off, and were soon very comfortably deposited in our boat-cloaks amidst the surrounding jungle.

I can answer for B. doing his duty for the first quarter of an hour, during which I happened to remain awake: the *kid* was most clamorous, and by the broken tone of its voice I am sure it was from the arduous application of the whipcord. However, by degrees its bleatings sounded more faintly in my ears; they at last ended in a confused murmur, and I remember no more until awoke by a sensa-

tion of extreme cold, when, on opening my eyes, I perceived that

"The grey-eyed morn smil'd on departing night,
Check'ring the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
And darkness flicker'd, like a drunkard reels
Forth from day's light and Titan's burning wheels."

And verily not only darkness, but other worthy gents were looking uncommonly like drunkards! not certainly reeling, but snoring most audibly. The very kid was quietly lying down, the sentinel fast as a church, the horse-keepers and horses, the women — oh, shame! oh, sorrow! and oh, womankind! — but I shall say no more of the unseemly sights disclosed by the first rays of that morning's sun. Enough, that the rosy-fingered Aurora must have blushed! ay, like a red cabbage; that I fired off both my barrels close to the ear of our watchful guard; that he, fancying all the tigers in Bengal

were on him, let fly at random, and nearly shot the kid; that the whole *camp* was in an uproar; and in five minutes we were on horseback, *rather* ashamed of our exploit, and leaving our dusky Dulcineas and our Ghorawallahs to reach their respective abodes in the best manner they could.

So much for our night expedition, and on its failure we were completely nonplussed, and knew not what new mode of attack to pursue. The subject was, however, taken up by Captain W. of the Commissariat, a real sportsman; and to his inventive genius was due the destruction of nearly every leopard on Mowlh-Ali rock, to the number, I think, of seven or eight. He caused a large wooden box, or rather a case, to be constructed exactly on the plan of a mouse-trap, except that it had an inner division, in which was placed a live goat, in his attempt to reach which the cheetah, on touching a

rope, caused the "portcullis" to fall, and cut off his own retreat. The cage was on low wheels, and was drawn by four bullocks to and from the rock.

Anxious to ascertain its success after my own repeated failures, I was at the foot of the hill at daylight on the morning succeeding the night when it was first set. I fear that Rochefoucault's celebrated saying of "*on ressent toujours du plaisir des malheurs de ses meilleurs amis*" is but too true; at least I felt that it would not have broken my heart to have found the trap tenanted by the goat alone; but it was "written" otherwise. On approaching I was soon made aware that W. had had a *nibble*, and from a fish that would have required more than the skill of Izaak Walton himself to have landed.

A noble cheetah was taken in the toils, and *toiling* most furiously to recover his liberty. The poor goat was lying, more

dead than alive, in the remotest corner of its partition, evidently untouched, but proving that you may as well be killed at once as frightened to death; whilst its dangerous neighbour was trying, with fang and claw, every bar of his prison; now bounding fiercely against the opposing barriers, and ever and anon crouching down on his belly, and looking "unutterable" things.

When I rode up he assumed the latter position. I had often heard of the repugnance and fear which the horse entertains of wild beasts, and consequently expected to experience some difficulty in inducing the Lamplighter to approach; but he was a *varmint* old nag, and went straight up to the cage without pricking an ear. The cheetah still remained motionless, except his eyes, which he rolled about most fearfully; and I shall never forget the *ogre*-like expression of that pale grey-

ish-blue eye—in it you might read at a glance the nature of the brute. We remained thus for a few seconds, stedfastly contemplating each other, when I thrust the handle of my spear between the bars; he sprang on it like lightning, wrenched it out of my hand, and in an instant had crushed the seasoned bamboo like a cabbage-stalk. The Lamplighter did not like the suddenness of the attack, for, starting back a few paces, he stood snorting at him with every appearance of trepidation. I was obliged to dismount in order to recover my maimed weapon, and soon made known in the Cantonment the news of the capture, which was the same afternoon drawn thither in triumph, and a council of war held to determine the fate of the prisoner.

There was but one opinion as to the sentence, "death," being unanimously pronounced; the question was, in what

manner it should be inflicted. Some were for turning him loose on the plain, and spearing him; some for shooting; others again proposed—probably in imitation of the Roman amphitheatres—to bait him with dogs in the Racket Court; and this last resolution, as being the most classical, was adopted.

A number of large pariah dogs was accordingly collected and turned into the Racket Court, the trap-door was raised, and everyone was on the tip-toe of expectation, thinking, of course, that the cheetah would rush out with a roar and make sad havoc amongst the parrys. But no such thing: he appeared to have taken too great a fancy for his berth to leave it, and it was not without difficulty that he was ejected, and then the poor devil appeared so much cowed that he shrank up into a corner; the dogs likewise did not seem very comfortable; every expedient

was tried to urge them on without avail; at last the spectators lost all patience; a rifle ball was sent through the head of the cheetah, the dogs were ignominiously kicked out of the arena as a set of cowardly rascals, and the whole business was voted a complete failure.

The leopard, notwithstanding its fierceness and untractable disposition, has been obliged to submit to the universal sway of man, and, like the hawk and dog, is made use of in the East in the amusement of the chase. The swiftness of the antelope can set the greyhound at defiance, but often succumbs to the wonderful bounds and agility of the hunting cheetah. To pursue this sport, the cheetah (hooded) is placed on a hackery or open cart drawn by bullocks, with his keeper beside him holding him in the slips. The hackery is then driven to the ground frequented by the antelope, who, accustomed

to the sight of bullock-carts belonging to the country people, allows it to approach without shewing much signs of fear. When at a convenient distance from the herd, the cheetah is unhooded, and as soon as he perceives his game, he slides quietly off the cart, crouches along, availing himself of the cover of every bush, rock, or tuft of grass, with all the address of an old light infantry soldier; by this means he frequently succeeds in approaching unperceived to within a hundred yards of the herd; when at this distance, he generally pauses for a moment or so to select his victim, which is invariably the finest animal of the flock, and then dashes into the midst of them with a succession of the most astonishing bounds, which in the twinkling of an eye bring him up with his prey; a stroke of the paw rolls it over, and he is fastened on its throat and draining its life-blood almost at one and

the same instant. The keeper now runs up, passes his knife across the buck's throat, fills with the blood a wooden bowl which is put before the cheetah, who is in the meantime secured and hooded, and generally has for his share a leg. Should he, however, fail after the first bounds in coming up with his game, he renounces at once the pursuit, crouches down, and becomes so refractory and sullen, that it is often a matter of some danger for the keeper to secure and replace him on the hackery.*

The hunting cheetah is in appearance very different from the common leopard; he is a tall flat-sided animal, with a small head, and is apparently in a state of continual restlessness until he has been gorged. The rich natives are fond of this

* For a further account of hunting the antelope by the cheetah, see *Sporting Magazine*, vol. iii., second series, p. 296.

sort of sport, which suits their indolent disposition, as they can indulge in it without much personal exertion.

In the suburbs of the city of Hyderabad I have frequently seen hunting cheetahs exposed for sale; they were picketted, by each leg being fastened to a tent peg firmly driven in the ground, and further secured by a chain round the neck. Even in this position, where they literally could not move a foot, they contrived to be nevertheless in a state of perpetual motion, by swinging their bodies to and fro. Even in the town of Hyderabad, I understand, numbers were constantly to be seen picketted together in this manner for sale. But this to a European was forbidden and dangerous ground; and such was the antipathy of these staunch Mahomedans to any individual bearing the garb of a Christian, that if one ventured without an escort within the precincts of the walls, it

was at the risk of life, and the certainty of being loaded with insults and abuse, pelted with filth, or spit in the face.

A more cut-throat and rascally *canaille* than the lower orders of this metropolis of the Deccan it has never been my lot to behold; and their antipathy was shewn not only to *Ferringhees*, (Franks or Christians,) but to their own people who had anything to do with Europeans, on whom they would most lavishly bestow the euphonous and complimentary terms of *Haram-zadahs*, *Bhan-choots*, and *Soor-marnawallahs*, terms not translateable into an European language. In consequence of this feeling there was an order (not often infringed) prohibiting any officer from entering the gates of the city; but with every precaution, collisions sometimes took place, which on one or two occasions ended in bloodshed. There was a standing order in the Cantonment of

Secunderabad prohibiting any of the Nizam's soldiers from passing with arms within the lines. A party so offending was stopped, disarmed, placed in the main guard, and finally sent back as prisoners to the city, with a representation to the Nizam's chief minister on the subject. Their escort, consisting of a soubahdar's party of sepoys, instead of waiting without the walls, and sending in a report of the circumstance, imprudently entered the city without even taking the precaution of loading their pieces or fixing bayonets. The prisoners happened to be Arabs, mercenaries of the Nizam, a set of men famed for their pride and courage. The escort unfortunately took the road leading past their barracks, whereat their comrades, indignant at seeing some of their body in durance vile, immediately threw arms to them from the windows, rushed down in a body, attacked the poor devils

of sepoys before they were aware of any hostile intention, and slew, wounded, or dispersed the whole body. This business caused a good deal of sensation at the time, but was eventually hushed up in consequence of an assurance from the minister that summary justice should be inflicted on the offenders. However, I remember that we did not feel particularly satisfied at this; and it was the general opinion that the culprits should have been delivered up and hanged in the presence of the whole force.

Although the public feeling towards Europeans would thus spontaneously burst forth amongst the lower orders, (the pulse of a nation,) policy demanded from the Omrahs (nobles), and particularly from the Nizam and his ministers, a very different expression towards those in whose power he felt himself so completely placed;

and at the different magnificent nautches and parties given frequently in the city, the officers of the force had the full benefit of the motives which gave rise to these entertainments, which, in point of splendour, often vied with those described in the Arabian Nights.

At these native routs, the *nautch*, (dance performed by girls whose profession it is,) the performance of buffoons, and the exhibition of fire-works, constituted the principal amusement of the evening, unless, as sometimes happened, they terminated with a substantial supper; but this was a complimentary addition to us as Europeans, and did not always occur. At the minister's, the scene of festivity was in a broad, open verandah, forming four sides of a court, or kind of garden, planted with cypress trees, and in the centre of which played a fountain of the

purest and coolest water. The whole place was carpetted with snow-white cloth, and brilliantly lit up with different coloured lamps, which produced the prettiest effect; and on entering and beholding the turbaned and bearded Omrahs inhaling the perfumed odour of the hookah, with their armed attendants and black African slaves, the deformed dwarfs and buffoons, the graceful and often lascivious postures of the dark "gazelle"-eyed maids gliding through the nautch, the spectator required but little from imagination to waft him into the realms of fiction, make him imagine himself at the court of the beautiful and sage Sherzade, or listening to one of her thousand and one stories! Nor was the illusion dispelled, until the distribution of attar of roses, and garlands of white, sweet-scented flowers, placed around the necks

of the guests, announced the conclusion of the feast. Reader, imagine a garland of jessamine round thy brows! it is the conclusion of the chapter, and thy patience deserves a reward.

CHAPTER VII.

UNIVERSAL INSANITY OF THE ENGLISH — A FOREIGNER'S IDEAS OF ENGLISH FOX-HUNTING — HOW TO GET A FIRM SEAT — GOING TOO FAST TO BE PLEASANT — PRINCE GEORGE OF CAMBRIDGE AT GIBRALTAR — FIRST DAY OF THE SEASON WITH THE CALPE HOUNDS.

"——— Hark! what loud shouts
Re-echo through the groves! He breaks away:
Shrill horns proclaim his flight.—Each straggling hound
Strains o'er the lawn to reach the distant pack;
'Tis triumph all, and joy."

SOMERVILLE.

MUY SEÑOR MIO,—Knowing you to be very partial to all things relating to the chase, I beg leave to send you the following letter from a friend at Gibraltar.

Letter from Don Antonio Fernandez to Don Juan Roblez, in London.

Gibraltar, November, 1838.

My dear R.,—Since I saw you at Madrid, I have been travelling much in Spain, and have at last brought up, at the blot on our escutcheon, the eye-sore of our country, Gibraltar. I have since my arrival here been trying to make out that most extraordinary of people, the English; and the arrival of their Queen Dowager, together with the residence on the Rock of one of their Princes of the Blood, have afforded me opportunities of doing so which I probably should not otherwise have enjoyed. I have come to the conclusion that they are a most unaccountable race, decidedly all *loco* (mad), from the highest to the lowest. What I have lately witnessed tends to confirm me in this belief, and I no longer marvel at the

exploits of Drake, of Jumper, or of old Elliott, in taking or defending this place; for what chance could Spaniards and men of reason have against Demonios, who appear to be divested of this attribute of humanity? Only imagine, my dear friend, H.R.H. Prince George of Cambridge working away like a common soldier at drill! toiling like a subaltern officer to learn to command a company and put the men through the manual and platoon exercises! attending every brigade-day like an aide-de-camp, and conforming to all the tedious rules of this strict garrison! All this, forsooth, to make himself acquainted with the art of war! as if, *por Dios!* royalty or even nobility required such a thing as *learning!* I think these poor people might take a lesson from *our* princes and generals, who command armies without perhaps ever having seen

a musket in their lives. But there is, after all, nothing like Spain and the Spaniards!

Then a party was got up to have a *batida* (battue) amongst the hills to shoot deer and wild hog: of this party my evil star doomed me to be one, and never shall I forget my sufferings. We had tents pitched for our reception beyond Castellar, and during the time we were out, it rained almost incessantly. However, they only gave a few G—d d—ns, and still tried to go on with their sport, without any regard to the fatigue and inconvenience experienced by His Royal Highness, who, to tell the truth, appeared to enjoy the *fun* very much. *Carai!* had I been a prince, what an example would I have made of all these madmen, who exposed me for three days to the rain, and were the cause of my being laid up

with rheumatism! and you know, my dear friend, what I suffer from that complaint.

After all, they only killed one great big boar and a roe-deer, and were nearly drowned in crossing one of the mountain-streams on their way back. Now, my dear Juan, when you coolly reflect that, if fond of hog's-flesh, H.R.H., at the expense of a few dollars, (which could be no object to him,) might have feasted on the same, morning, noon, and night, without stirring from his own table—and the pork fed in the Cork Wood is really very good at this time of the year—you will agree with me that he must either be very badly advised or decidedly wrong in the upper story, when, in order to procure only *one* pig, he exposed himself during three days and nights to wet and cold, wind and rain, to say nothing of the intolerable fatigue of climbing those endless hills, and the chance

of being made food for the fishes, in fording numberless swollen and angry torrents.

This expedition should have been a lesson to me to have nothing more to do with English *caceria* (hunting), but, alas! wisdom is only to be attained by dear-bought experience. As soon as I was enabled to leave my bed, I heard of nothing but preparations for the approaching *Calpe Hunt*, as the late rains had rendered the ground fit for riding. What wet ground had to do with riding I was at a loss to conceive, nor could I make out at all what sort of *caceria* could it be which excited so much interest, as I was told that the largest beast they ever killed was a fox. However, never having seen an animal of that description, I allowed curiosity to conquer prudence, and in an ill-fated moment promised to accompany a friend next day to the place whence

they commenced operations, and which was called the First Venta.

On my arrival there I was rather astonished to see a great many gentlemen of my acquaintance in the most extraordinary costume in the world, as nearly all were in the red English uniform, but shorn of the lace and epaulettes. Poor fellows! I concluded that they could not afford to get plain clothes, and did not like to run the risk of spoiling all their finery. Some had on boots drawn over the pantaloons and topped with yellow leather; others great fishermen's boots, reaching half way up the thigh — the whole putting me more in mind of a masquerade than anything else.

Then there were a great number of curious looking piebald dogs, and the great subject of lamentation was, that there were so *few*, and that in consequence of being disappointed in the arrival of more by the

last steamer, they feared I should not see much sport. Little did I imagine at the time the break-neck work they were pleased to call *sport*. Whilst thus engaged in conversation, a caballero came up at a gallop, pulled out his watch, and hoped he was not late. This was the Prince. But only imagine a *Prince* saying such a thing! A fresh horse was brought to him, and he actually with his own hands shifted the stirrup leathers from one saddle to the other, and buckled on his Mackintosh, whilst the groom was holding both horses, and not one of all those present offering to assist him. Such are English manners! How differently would a Prince of *our* country have been treated!

Well, at last we all mounted and rode off, they said to *draw* a neighbouring covert; but what painting or drawing could have to do with the business of the day I

was at a loss to conceive, but resolved to wait patiently and see the result. The *drawing* (oh, ye shades of Murillo and Cano!) consisted in turning the dogs into the bushes, whilst some of the caçadores rode in with them, and commenced shouting and hallooing like *possessed* ones. Presently there was a short howl, and all the dogs began to yell and run away from the wood, as if it contained something of which they were much afraid. The horsemen immediately galloped after the dogs, I suppose to catch them, as I could see nothing else for them to pursue, whilst the latter continued to cry and run, and run and cry with all their might.

My English friend had assured me that the horse I was on was a right good one, and understood his work. Alas! that I should have believed a heretic! The devil, notwithstanding all my efforts to keep him in—for why should *I* risk my neck

in catching *their* dogs?—nearly pulled off my arms, and, *maldita sea su alma*, was nearly pulling me over his head, when the fortunate thought struck me (you know my presence of mind) of letting go the reins and seizing hold of the saddle with both hands; and to this ingenious device I attribute my preservation from utter destruction on that eventful day.

Hitherto we had been galloping up a steep mountain called the *Magazine Hill*, and I was in hopes, by the time we got to the top, we would catch those demonios of dogs, and put an end to my troubles. Judge of my horror, when, on reaching the crest, I could just see their tails disappearing below the opposite declivity, which was dreadfully steep, covered with huge rocks, and broken with dry watercourses. "*Dios mio de mi alma!*" shrieked I, "will nobody stop me?" At this mo-

ment the Prince (alas! that a Prince should be so *loco*) passed, urging his horse at full speed down the frightful steep. I could behold no more, but, resigning myself to my fate, I shut my eyes and held on with redoubled energy. Methought I was going down, down to the regions of the damned with crowds of condemned spirits. Never, if I live a thousand years, shall I forget the dreadful sounds and sensations I then experienced. They tingle at this moment in every nerve. In utter darkness—for I dared not open my eyes—with the yells of those accursed hell hounds, and the screeches of the no less accursed madmen, penetrating my very brain, the clashing of the horses' hoofs over the rocks, the sudden and violent plunges of the animal I bestrode, and over which I had not the least control . . . I can compare the scene to nothing but the description of the defeat of Satan, by

the English poet, who must have borrowed his ideas from a fox-hunt.

"The overthrown he raised, and as a herd
Of goats and tim'rous flock together throng'd
Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued
With terrors and with furies to the bounds
And crystal wall of Heaven, which, opening wide,
Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
Into the wasteful deep: the monstrous sight
Struck them with horror backward, but far worse
Urged them behind; headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heaven; eternal wrath
Burnt after them."

And verily we looked more like spirits fleeing the wrath of Heaven than human beings in our sober senses. The saints only can tell how I ever reached the bottom of the hill; how in our headlong course I escaped being precipitated from my horse and ground to atoms against the rocks, and under the hoofs of the wild beasts around me. Wild! both men and horses. Never did I witness such *locura* (madness,

folly.) However, we eventually did reach the plain, and then, and not till then, did I open my eyes, and, great God! what a spectacle presented itself! about a hundred yards in front was a broad and deep drain, at which every one was riding at full speed, still, like fools, vainly endeavouring to catch the dogs: some by the help of Providence managed to clear it, one or two went right in, horses and all. I arrived within a few yards of the brink, a sudden dizziness overcame my senses, I abandoned my hold of the saddle, and as my horse was in the very act of taking the fearful leap, I made a convulsive grasp at the reins—a heavy splash, a gurgling sound of mud and water in my ears, is all I remember.

* * * *

The letter goes on with details foreign to the subject; but the Editor is informed

that the unfortunate neophyte to fox-hunting, after being dragged from under his horse by some countrymen, was conveyed to San Roque, where he lay for some time in a very precarious state.

The fox, on the occasion in question, took to earth in the Cork Wood, after affording a good run; and the entire field, including his Royal Highness, (who during the whole day was well to the front,) got a complete drenching before they regained that evening the *covert* of the Rock.

The Calpe Hunt is in daily expectation of a reinforcement of dogs from England, and, under the auspices of H. M—t, Esq., their zealous huntsman, hope this winter to make the Cork Wood and Malaga hills re-echo often to that sweetest of all music—a pack of hounds in full cry.

Our Spanish friend mentioned the arrival at Gibraltar of the Dowager Queen

Adelaide, and H. R. H. Prince George of Cambridge, both events causing a great stir in the garrison, which, during the whole of that winter, was kept alive by the presence of the latter. To say that Prince George was an universal favourite with everybody, whom he conciliated by his courteous, open, and *soldier-like* manners, would be but barely doing him justice. But those who were in the habit of meeting him on parade and duty, at the festive board, or in the excitement of the chase, must concur in saying that during his stay at Gibraltar he purchased golden opinions of all men. In a brief period he became perfectly acquainted with his military duties, under the able tuition of Colonel Knight, and of his zealous adjutant, Lieutenant Williamson, both of the 33rd regiment, to which corps he was, on his arrival, attached; and after

going through the various branches of his drills with all the assiduity of a subaltern first joining, he, in the short space of a few months, so completely made himself master of the difficult arcana of military science, as to be able, not only on their private parade, but during our general brigade days on the neutral ground, to command the gallant corps with which he was doing duty, with as much judgment and skill as the Waterloo veteran, whose place he temporarily occupied—and all who knew *him* are aware that this is not saying a *little* in his H. R. H.'s favour, though not one jot more than he deserves.

On his arrival, waving his right to compliments as a prince of the blood, he requested that the guards should not be turned out on his approach, and expressed, I believe, the desire that no ceremony should be observed towards him,

which I dare say he will do us the justice to allow we generally had the good sense to comply with; and I believe I may affirm that no undue familiarity on the part of any officer caused him to repent having taken this step.

On one occasion, indeed, it is related that at a ball at Government House, he was importuned by somebody, who had the bad taste to persecute him during the evening by addressing him constantly as his "Royal Highness." At last, the Prince, losing all patience, exclaimed, "D——n his Royal Highness! we will, if you please, for the time, put him into my pocket," and suiting the motion to the words, took the star off his breast, and safely deposited it in the sanctum he alluded to.

He was an honorary member of several of the messes of the regiments stationed here; and when giving them the benefit of

his company, enjoyed his glass and cracked his joke with the most jolly ensign of the party. But with all his high spirits and love of sociability, he deserves the greater credit for the restraint he must have imposed on himself by his seclusion during several hours of the day, which, I believe, he devoted to the study of the drier details of the profession he had adopted. After morning parade, except on a hunting day, seldom was he seen out of his quarters till the time of his evening ride.

But the "field" in which "Royal George" shewed to greatest advantage was that which it is our peculiar boast to cultivate in these "sporting pages;" and although an ornament to the "scarlet," he was more particularly so to the "pink," for in true Leicestershire trim did we twice a week turn out with our *nate* little pack of "Calpe" hounds, and in the

dark shadows of the "Cork Wood" they would oft

"Make the welkin answer them,
Fetching shrill echoes from the hollow earth."

Every one does not possess the nerve requisite to ride well up to hounds, over the rugged and broken mountains of this part of Spain; there are, it is true, no bull-finches, no five-barred gates, no double-ditches, but all this is plain sailing compared to the precipitous and rocky sides of the Sierras, down which you *must* rattle full speed if you wish to live near the dogs—to large ledges of smooth rock, where your horse's legs fly from under him like a stroke of tragic lightning—to apparently bottomless ravines, which must be crossed, or to blind fissures in the burnt-up soil, where your nag's pins and your own neck stand a nearly equal chance of being broken.

But through and over all this did

Prince George's grey barb carry him, at a pace it was difficult to approach, and though myself not much accustomed to keep in the rear, I must plead guilty to often having attempted in vain (for I never but on one occasion succeeded) to spatter the mud over His Royal Highness's most serene countenance; and on *that* occasion it could scarcely be said to be a *fair* go-by. There was a burning scent, and the dogs were running like devils incarnate; with some half-dozen of us well up to their sterns, Prince George, of course, amongst the select few. At the bottom of a hill, which sloped at an angle of about forty-five degrees, was a broad and yawning chasm, deepened by a stream, which, though unseen, like an insidious disease preying on the human frame, had worked itself into the very bowels of the earth, and increased tenfold the terrors of the appalling leap. As I was saying,

rattling full swing down the hill, we came most unexpectedly on this awful *stopper*. I was one of the few to whom it did not prove such—the pace was too good to admit of any "craning"—we *all* crammed at it: some got over; the horses of others swerved; but, strange to say, the "grey barb" came to a dead halt, Prince George flew like a shot over his head, and as I passed I saw him safely deposited, without, I believe, any injury, in a soft muddy spot,—on the brink of the chasm.

But if the reader will suffer us to draw the covert of his patience, we will put on foot an Andalusian "zorra,"* initiate him into the mysteries of the "Calpe hunt," and endeavour to give him some idea of our Gibraltar sport, which is got up more in the true old English style than anything I have seen in the various foreign settlements it has been my fate to visit.

* Spanish for "fox."

We must premise by stating that, in consequence of the numerous earths, number of foxes, difficulty of the ground, and usual deficiency of that great requisite "scent," our kills are not so many as we could wish, but our ardour is by this nowise abated, and all look on the "kennel" as one of the greatest godsends to the pent-up garrison of the "Rock." When disheartened and stupified by incessant guards, courts-martial, and drills, smothered with clouds of pipe-clay, and stunned by the continual roll of the drum, what can be more refreshing to the jaded mind, or so effectually renew the depressed spirits, as the "musical discord, the sweet thunder" of our gallant pack.

But we will make a fair start from head-quarters, the time of year about the end of November or beginning of December, weather mild, and ground moistened by a plentiful fall of rain on the preceding

day and night; place, the neighbourhood of the South Barracks, in the fine square of which, about the hour of half-past nine, grooms might be seen leading about small, though powerfully built horses, under fourteen hands, whose glossy coats, clean pasterns, and racing tails, mathematically squared off a little above the hock, shewed the care with which they were tended, and the pride their masters took in their appearance.

In the course of a few minutes, breeched, booted, and "pinked," as if at Melton Mowbray, the votaries of Nimrod appear, and wiping off the stains of eggs and bread and butter from their lips, the remains of a good breakfast, some seven or eight joyfully vault into the saddle, and jogging along the "Saluting Battery," soon reach South-port Gate, and, entering the town, steer as they best may through the numerous "bourros," "carros," water-carts,

drays, Jews, Moors, and contrabandistas, with which, even at this early hour, the narrow "Caille Real"* is infested.

This intricate navigation requires the full use of the eyes, and is increased in difficulty, as *these* are often more interestingly employed in maybe returning the lightning glance, which is scarcely deadened in its effect by flashing from beneath the long black silken lash, and heavy, sleepy lid; or, maybe, in watching the graceful wave of a slender white finger from behind the scarce opened "jalousie." Ye dark-eyed maidens of the Rock, much will ye have to answer for! for while ye are pulverizing the too susceptible heart of the up-gazing fox-hunter, he is probably riding over some unfortunate Jew porter, too heavily laden to be able to get out of the way.

* Answering to our "High-street" in English provincial towns.

But we will suppose our party to have escaped all the manifold dangers of the town—they cross the square of the Casemate Barracks, and, diving under the deep archway, emerge again into the light of day at the portcullis of Landport Guard.

Here they meet with an object on whom to discharge the battery of their wit and exuberant spirits,—it is the captain on duty, who, if a sportsman himself, is enduring all the pangs of Tartarus in being thus placed in durance vile, whilst his friends are all on the move to enjoy themselves on this promising day. "Well, B——," says one of our fox-hunters, "you are a lucky dog. Here we are, going to fag ourselves to death, and maybe break our necks, after a stinking fox, whilst you are luxuriating in all the blessings of indolent repose."

"A fine day," exclaims a second wag; "don't you think there will be a good scent?"

"Take a seat behind?" asks a third, as he jogs past.

"You be d—d," at last surlily mutters the unfortunate captain, as he takes the segar out of his cheek, and spits over the chain of the drawbridge. Nearly the same scene occurs at the next officer's guard, which is at Bayside, from whence we are in sight of the kennel. Old "Wheeler," who has the care of this department, does justice to his charge, both for the condition in which he turns out the hounds, and for the cleanliness, neatness, and perfect order in which the whole establishment is kept; the old fellow in the soiled red frock and black velvet hunting cap is now mounted on that sorry-looking grey, and with shouldered pick-axe and shovel, whilst we proceed to the day's meet at the Pine Wood, will shove on, and stop the earths in the direction we are likely to take.

The hounds are just unkennelling, and

there, mounted on Turpin, that vicious brute who is obliged to be kept muzzled, and late, as usual, is our huntsman, who ought to have been off a full half-hour before; but M— says it is bad to give the hounds time to get cold on the road, and M— *must* be right; his two whips are busily entering on their vocation; that steady looking man is "John;" the young varmint on the dun, which he calls the "yollor orse," is Master "Jack," a recent importation from Yorkshire.

We will let them come after us, and, following the winding of the bay, try to overtake the group in front, amongst whom, on his strong grey horse, may be seen the master of the hounds, in, I warrant, none of the most amiable moods, from the delay in getting the dogs off.

The tide is in, has covered the hard portion of the shore, and we are obliged to ride up to our horses' fetlocks through

the deep moving sand; we reach the ruins of Fort San Felipe, and there stands our old friend the one legged beggar, with a bit of rope doing the duty of a port-fire, for the benefit of the smokers; we pull up, ignite a weed, give him a "doce,"* and returning his courteous "*Vaya usted con Dios*," by "May you remain with God," go along quietly, for the hounds are still behind, and it is useless to distress our cattle over this heavy ground, which continues of the same nature for about a mile further, when we strike into the very tolerable road of San Roque. But imagine not, unsophisticated reader, that to the Spaniards are we indebted for such a thing as a carriage road. "No, Señor," this is kept in its present state of repair at the expense of the "Plaza" of Gibraltar, principally by voluntary contributions

* A small silver coin current at Gibraltar, and worth about threepence.

from the merchants, assisted by the officers of the garrison—John Bull here, as elsewhere, scattering his money when it is withheld by the niggardly natives, who owe to us their means of communication even as far as the Cork Wood, the road to which was, I believe, undertaken by that great benefactor to the "Rock" and its neighbourhood, old General Don, who was long its respected governor.

Following the above "Camino Real," we pass the Spanish race-course, are assailed by numerous barking curs in traversing the dirty little village of "Campamiento," and at the distance of about six miles from Bayside reach the outskirts of the good town of San Roque. If at the last village we were annoyed by dogs, here we were equally so by a set of ragged urchins, offering their services to hold our horses whilst we refresh ourselves at

the "fonda," (inn,) and assailing us with incessant cries of "Johnny, Johnny;"* "Las Zorras;" "Los Pereros." Getting at last clear of this abominable din, and leaving its meagre-looking Alameda on our left, we pass over the brow of the hill, and, losing sight of San Roque, commence a steep descent to the bottom of a pretty valley, through which flows a stream, swollen by the rains of the preceding night.

As we pass the ford we are assailed by the "sal Andaluz" (Andalusian wit) of a group of naïds, who, with petticoats well tucked up, are mercilessly thumping heaps of linen against the hard rocks, probably as a punishment for having become dirty. They are very vociferous towards the party in front of us, who probably cannot answer

* "Johnny" is the appellation bestowed near Gibraltar on every Englishman, as we call a Frenchman "Johnny Crapaud."

in their lingo. But stay; if they are saucy, we will give them a settler.

"Mira," said a sturdy wench, pointing at me with her finger—"Mira Fraquita, que feo esta aquel con el calagnez."

"Y tu mi vida," replied I, politely doffing the said calagnez,* "sabes que eres hermosa, que te quiero y quisiera darte un beso." This, as I foresaw, had the desired effect; with a "Caramba! habla Español!" they commenced giggling, held their tongues, and allowed us to proceed in peace to our destination, which we had by this time nearly reached, as we soon after came in sight of the Pine Wood, where we were to throw off.

The huntsman, hounds, and whips are now come up, and whilst they are taking a little breathing time, we will have a peep at the prospect, and give some account of the party assembled, which now

* Broad brimmed Spanish hat.

amounted to from five and twenty to thirty horsemen, and one lady; for imagine not that in our toils we were not cheered by the approving smiles of beauty; and to come within the influence of those smiles they must have been deserved; for bold was the rider and good the steed who in the headlong chase could keep near Miss ——, as her light and graceful form was borne along on the wings of the wind by her fleet and beautiful small bright bay steed. Nothing stopped her bold course; the steepest hill, the broadest ravine, the most entangled dells of the Cork Wood opposed themselves in vain to the sylvan ardour of this second "Die Vernon."

She was indeed the tutelar deity, the very Diana of our hunt, inciting us to deeds which never would have been attempted or executed but to gain her approving smile; and albeit I am not one of those who admire in woman the accom-

plishments of "winding horn" or "hallooing hound"—still Miss —— only came to see them throw off. She would only then follow them for a short distance; till, carried away by her enthusiasm, and forgetting every resolution, she invariably found herself, "malgré elle," one of the first in at the death. Women in a hunting field are generally in the way; but Miss —— was so enthusiastic, so good-natured, gave so little trouble, set such an example of bold riding, and looked, withal, so beautiful in the excitement of the chase, that he, indeed, must have been a cynic who did not hail with gladness her approach, or deeply regret her occasional absence.

The field, as has been already remarked, consisted of nearly thirty horsemen; these were, generally speaking, officers of the garrison, very few civilians patronizing the hunt. Here was seen, as in an English

field, some variety of costume; for although the greater number turned out in "pink," with "tops," or "Jacks," there was a slight sprinkling of green coats and shooting jackets. The horses small; amongst colours the black greatly predominating; whilst the "Gibraltar dock," the tail squared off a little below the end of the stump, gave them a rakish and racing appearance. On this occasion there were in the field several noted horses, horses who for years had been the pride of the Calpe Hunt, or had borne away cups at the half-yearly garrison races. Turpin, Whalebone, Jack Spiggot, Sorcerer, Constitution, and Ronda, were amongst the number of good and tried 'uns; the latter carrying the light weight of our tutelar huntress, who on this day was to outdo herself.

Although every one present had often witnessed the scene now spread out be-

fore us, still its inexhaustible beauties afforded a never-failing source of admiration. The dark and wavy pine trees in front of us *threw back*, as an artist would term it, the vast expanse of the Cork Wood, from whence appeared to be timidly peering out the white belfry of the "Almoraïma," or Cork Convent. This, again, overtopped by rugged Sierras, on which, proudly rearing their heads, stood the turreted walls of Castellar, the princely abode of the Marquis of Moscoso, was bounded in the far far distance by the faintly seen hills of Gaucin and Ronda, the outlines of which, on a clear day, were barely perceptible. Nor was the foreground of the picture unworthy of the rest of the landscape; plants and shrubs from every clime and region appeared here to be assembled, and to vie with each other in the luxuriance of their growth.

The pine recalled our stormy regions

of the north; the aloe, cactus, and yonder groups of tall date trees, waving their "leaf-crowned heads" over the cottage in the valley below, brought back to the mind of many present the burning scenes of the tropics, the scorching land-winds, the tinkling bell of the camel, and the sands of the desert; whilst the peculiar growth of the spot, the palmitto, the myrtle, and wild lavender, sprung up around, and a variety of luxuriant bulbous plants and many-coloured flowers spread at our feet a richly-enamelled carpet, which was unscrupulously trodden on and defaced by the gay group above mentioned.

But the master of the hounds is getting fidgety; girths have long since been tightened, stirrups adjusted, and all the little preliminaries to a start duly observed; watches are produced, the hands mark that the momentous hour of eleven

is already gone by. "Gentlemen," exclaims the man of power, "the prince intended positively to be with us to-day; shall we start without him, or give him five minutes law?"

"Five minutes, by all means," was the universal cry. The potentate, with one foot still in the stirrup, held in his hand the arbiter of fate. Three times had the "second hand" described the minor revolution of its circle; all was anxious expectation, when, at this moment, emerging from behind the ascent, his hack, "embossed with foam and dark with soil," appeared at the top of his speed the "expected."

"You are just in time, Sir," said the master; "two minutes more, and you would have missed us."

"I'm sorry you waited at all," replied his Royal Highness. "However," added he, gaily, as he vaulted into the saddle of

his grey barb, "I'm devilish glad I've caught you—so fire away!"

And away we went, the hounds, thrown into the covert of the pine wood, spread

> "Down in the vale, with pine and cypress clad,
> Refreshed with gentle winds, and brown with shade."

Still we were not "refreshed" by a single challenge; yet this was usually a sure find; but the mystery was soon solved when we came on a party of wood-cutters, who from early dawn had been disturbing with their sounding axes the stillness of the darksome wood. Trying any further here was useless; therefore, calling off the dogs, we crossed the brook in the hollow, and commenced drawing the hanging coverts of the steep hill on the opposite side of the valley. In this land of rock and mountain there is nothing like securing an elevated situation to ensure a good start, and it is so much more

advantageous rattling *down* a steep descent to "blowing" your nag up the nearly perpendicular sides of one of these confounded sierras. Accordingly, in conformity to military tactics, the "brow" of the hill seemed the object of all; some had attained the "summit" of their wishes, others were still toiling up the steep ascent, when the "gallant chiding, echoing through the grove," together with the "hoick" "hoick" of the huntsman, proclaimed that the game was afoot.

"A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to or cheered with horn,"

than was uttered by our gallant little pack, as, emerging from the thorny covert they boldly breasted the hill, and with a burning scent shewed us the way towards the Duke of Kent's farm. Woe be to those who at this critical moment were still near the bottom of the ravine, for little chance had they of seeing any of

that day's sport. *Horseonality* is not personality; we shall therefore leave the riders to oblivion, and only transmit to posterity the names of the gallant steeds who lived through this long day.

On breaking covert, about a dozen of those who had reached the top of the hill got a good start, but wearisome were the efforts of the unfortunates left in the hollow to make up their lee-way. Amongst the former we observed the "grey barb," Ronda, Jack Spiggot, Turpin, Sam, Hedgestake, and Tally-ho, making great play across the high open country which extends along the ridge of hills towards the first venta. "Jack" the whip was also screwing along the "yellor orse" at a great rate, taking everything he came across; but it was not until near the Duke of Kent's farm that the field became *select*, or that the survivors had anything like a "tail."

On leaping down a perpendicular ledge of rocks, some five or six feet high, at this time of the chase, I nearly lodged on "Jack," who, having parted company with the dun, was rolling down the steep bank. A few seconds afterwards we came to a check, when I observed Jack wearing a most woeful countenance, with bridle over arm, and dragging along his poor brute, who was limping on three legs.

"Had a bad purl, Jack?" I observed, whilst easing the head of my panting steed.

"Ees, Zur; and I'm afeard I've done for the yellor orse. In Yorkshire, we never has none of them inf——"

But here the "Hark, for'ad! for'ad!" broke in on Jack's observations, as I tightened the reins and applied the Brummagems. The last I saw on that day of poor Jack, he was standing the very prototype of disappointed hopes, with hands

in his breeches pockets, and sorrowfully contemplating the "yellor orse."

The check just alluded to had somewhat mended our bellows and brought up a few stragglers, so that when the hounds again took up the drag, which made a sudden cast to the right, we again mustered rather strong. An unexpected obstacle was, however, doomed to thin our ranks; the hollow into which we had descended, and which lies between the most northerly extremity of the Magazine Hill and the Duke of Kent's farm was laid out in fields and gardens, in which the ground had been rendered by the late rains, extremely swampy.

When hounds are at full cry, the labours of the farmer are often overlooked, and Spanish farmers have little respect for fox-hunting. We were pushing along as best we might through the low swampy ground, when suddenly on our left I per-

ceived some half-dozen peasants armed with sticks and clubs, uttering the euphonous exclamations of "Demonios!" "Puñiatieros!" &c., who, without any regard to our enthusiastic feelings, were endeavouring to intercept our passage across their vile "huertas." I saw them get within shot of one unfortunate; suddenly the "porro" was hurled round the head of the infuriated "païsano; it left his hand like a catapult, and struck the poor devil off his horse.* As has been before said, little sympathy is to be expected in a hunting-field. This only tended to expedite our movements, fearful of encountering a similar fate, and thereby losing the rest of this splendid run.

* Although we always made it a rule to propitiate the farmers by making them a compensation for any injury we might have done to their wheat-fields, with some obstreperous characters an encounter of the above description sometimes occurred.

Our panting steeds reached the centre of the valley, where, ere we could be aware of it, we came on a fearful yawning ditch. This would have been nothing had we been favoured with sound ground either to spring from or to land on; but no—it was a complete quagmire on either side, whilst the bottom presented a mass of black matter of the consistency of neither mud nor water. It *must* have been the identical ditch so feelingly described by our Spanish friend! All these observations were sooner made than related.

They say that none fight like cowards whose retreat has been cut off. I know not whether this was the case with us, for we all (all those, I mean, who were *up*) gallantly crammed our horses at the gaping gulf. Turpin was leading; he leapt short, struggled for a second against the opposite bank, and fell back

into the mire; whilst his rider, cleverly disengaging himself, remained unscathed on the bank. Whilst this was going on, I observed a curious scene to our right. At a part of the ditch rather narrower than the rest, a rush was made by three horses: the first, a grey, landed on his knees, and came over on the opposite bank; the rider of Giraffe, in the meantime, unable to turn his horse, took the leap at the same spot, lodged on the grey, and came over likewise; whilst "Pickwick" made a dead stand, threw the rider over his head, was caught by our dismounted but ready-witted huntsman, who, unable to extricate Turpin, vaulted on the former, crammed him a second time at the ditch, which he succeeded in getting over just as it was cleverly cleared by Ronda, followed by "Jack Spiggot," the "grey barb," and "Sam."

The rubicon thus passed, great play was made towards the Cork Wood. On making the first height, it was amusing to look around and view

"The strange confusion of the vale below,
Where sore vexation reigns—
——— old age laments,
His vigour spent: the tall, plump, brawny youth
Curses his cumb'rous bulk, and envies now
The short pygmean race he whilom kenn'd
With proud insulting leer. A chosen few
Alone the sport enjoy, nor droop beneath
Their pleasing toils." SOMERVILLE.

Still we swept on, and it was evident that, unless a check intervened, the present party would not be increased. However, just as we entered the precincts of the "eternal forest," I saw Whalebone, carried on by his immense power; and Hedgestake, who had little weight to carry besides himself, creeping gradually up. We plunged into the shades of the

forest, keeping time to the melodious strains before us, for we could no longer "view" the performers, till we reached the brink of a tremendous gully, whose lips

> "Stood aloof like scars remaining
> Of cliffs that had been rent asunder."

Its breadth from bank to bank might be a hundred yards, and at about half that depth below, a torrent dashed its turbid waters over a deep and rocky bed; but we were not to be stopped.

> "In vain the *stream*
> In foaming eddies whirls; in vain the ditch,
> Wide gaping, threatens death. The *craggy steep*,
> Where the poor dizzy shepherd crawls with care,
> And clings to every twig, gives us no pain;
> But down we sweep, as stoops the falcon bold
> To pounce his prey. Then up the *opponent hill*,
> By the *swift motion swung*, we mount aloft."
>
> SOMERVILLE.

And it must verily have been by the "swift motion swung" that we succeeded

in reaching the summit of the opposite bank; but our nags had no steam to spare; "bellows to mend" was the order of the day, and the "persuaders" were in full requisition to raise a gallop; at least, I can answer for "Sam."

Forest-hunting, in my opinion, has not half the charms of the open. I am not satisfied with the "melodious sounds," but like occasionally to have a peep at the musicians; and, impelled by this feeling, often have I pulled up at the entrance of the Cork Wood, and turned my horse's head homeward in a fit of disgust. On the present occasion, however, the run had been too brilliant, the scent too good, and the field too select, to admit for a moment of such a thought.

Putting down our heads, we therefore pushed through the impending boughs, crashed over the underwood, and going

as wide a berth as possible to the roughly-indented and wrinkled trunks of the ancient cork trees, used our best and utmost endeavours not to lose the "sound," as we had the "sight," of our flying guides.

"Time" and "space" are not included in the dictionary of a sharp run. In going at railroad speed, minutes and miles are not counted, and we are only made aware of the distance we had come by a perceptible change in the nature of the scenery around us. The uniform dark evergreen foliage of the *chaparros* had given place to the more variegated autumnal tints of the spreading oaks, which, growing in a soft, marshy soil, and united overhead by clusters of the wild vine, clematis, and other creepers, proclaimed us to have reached the verge of the "sota," a marshy hollow which traverses the whole length of the forest, from the

"Pass of Aberfoil"* to near the second venta; and which, from the depth of its black quagmires, is in many places impassable.

Still the hounds *had* passed it, and follow them we must. At every step we took, the ground became more unsound; our horses wallowed up to the girths in the dark mire, till, after a desperate forward plunge, Whalebone's ponderous frame was fairly fixed above the shoulders. To follow in his wake would have been folly: even the fair Diana reined in her steed; and skirting the edge of this fathomless bog, we sought in vain for some "fordable" spot. At last, we luckily

* A romantic site, where the path, scarped out of the side of the mountain, runs along the head of a densely-wooded ravine on the road between San Roque and the Venta del Agualcahijo, commonly called the "Long Stables." It has been so denominated from its fancied resemblance to the spot of that name described in one of the Waverley novels.

stumbled on a swine-herd,* who, seeing our dilemma, exclaimed, as he set us on the right scent both of fox and foot-path—

"Por aqui—por aqui ha ido la zorra, y muy cansada, y ustedes pueden pasar tambien."—"This way; this way the fox has gone, and very much tired; and you can also cross here," said he, pointing to the "huellas," or hoof-marks of cattle, where the ground was less treacherous, and where, though certainly much to the detriment of our "pink," we succeeded in crossing.

A short check after a long run is said to be the saving of life to many a gallant steed, and I have no doubt but this was the case at present with some of our

* The Cork Wood is, during the autumn, the resort of numerous flocks of swine, feeding on the acorns of the oak and cork trees, which renders their flesh as great a delicacy as that of the wild boar, from the similarity of their food.

party. However, on getting at last across the "sota," we pushed along with renewed energy, and the faint echoes reverberating amidst the tall trunks of the oaks just served to guide us in the direction of the chase, which, from having taken a due westerly direction, we concluded would soon be brought up by the swoln waters of the "Guadranque." But we reckoned without our host, and reached the banks of the roaring and angry torrent just in time to see the dripping forms of the dogs disappear in the underwood on the other side, and much lower down the stream.

There was a dead pause of a minute: even the fair huntress pulled up, and no one liked to be the first to try the navigation of these turbid waters, fretting and boiling as they were over fallen trunks of trees, immense fragments of rock, and other "debris." At last, exclaiming, "It shall never be said that we were thrown

out," "Hedgestake" dashed gallantly into the stream: nothing more than example was required. "Ronda" shewed signs of following, but at our earnest entreaty was induced to desist; and to our shame be it spoken, she was left in solitary grief, like "Patience on a monument," to survey our efforts as we stemmed the torrent.

Fox-hunters have little gallantry even towards one who might be considered their patron goddess. As we scrambled up the bank, and disappeared amidst the grove of oleander and tall gum cistus on the opposite side, one farewell wave of the hand was all we could bestow, ere, with redoubled ardour, we tried to get again on the "drag." But we could make nothing of it: the scent was cold, the ground so completely covered with tangled creepers and thorny underwood, and, moreover, so rugged and precipitous,

that, after making two or three unsuccessful casts, we gave it up as a bad job, called off the dogs, and again swam the river where we had before crossed over.

By this time several stragglers had come up, who, out of sheer envy, laughed at our unsuccessful, though heroic, ducking; and it was resolved, *nem. con.*, to try back towards the sota, into which the hounds had no sooner been cast than they opened on what we soon discovered to be, not Reynard, but a roe-deer. With the "Calpe" we were nowise particular; "all fish to our net" was the motto of our hunt; we changed our Tally-ho! for Tantivy! and pursued our new quarry with as much ardour as the case would admit of; in other words, as tired dogs, blown horses, and jaded riders could do. But it was "no go;" evidently more than one "corso"* was afoot; and to the

* Roe-buck.

above disadvantages the scent was every minute getting colder, as were likewise the drenched and intrepid navigators of the Guadranque. Our "hacas"* had had enough for the day, and by unanimous consent we drew off the dogs, and held a council of war under a gnarled and aged oak as to our future proceedings.

On dismounting, his royal highness found himself disabled by a large thorn which had penetrated through his boot into the side of his foot, and which he could not extract without assistance. After a good deal of trouble and a considerable effusion of blood, this was at last effected by a witty son of Hibernia, who during the operation had placed a white handkerchief under the prince's foot; and when he had concluded, gravely folding up the crimsoned cambric, and

* A Spanish term for a small horse: query, if *hack* and *hackney* be not thence derived?

putting it into his pocket, exclaimed — "Arrah! sure, though I don't belong to the blood royal, some of the blood royal, by Jasus, belongs to me! and I'll engage 'tis well arned, after this day's *heavy dinging!*"

After a short consultation, trying the contents of our pocket pistols, distributing a few sandwiches, and once more bestriding our well "gruelled" and now sorry prads, we turned our heads homewards; and most of us, on reaching San Roque, pulled up at the "New Fonda," and after washing down some of its famed pork-chops with copious draughts of "vino seco," found that the additional ballast did not in the least abate the speed of our return to head-quarters, nor, when that was effected, destroy our appetite that evening at mess; when over bumpers of claret we "fought the day's battles" o'er again, and drank to the frequent repetition of such a good gallop.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEEP JUNGLE SHOOTING — AN INDIAN FOREST — ENCOUNTER WITH A TIGER — A TOUCH AT A WILD BUFFALO.

"I'll read you matter deep and dangerous;
As full of peril, and adventurous spirit." * *
SHAKESPEARE.

SHOOTING in India may properly be classed under three distinct heads—wet, dry, and deep jungle shooting. In the two former excellent sport may be had by a good shot, and one who has a proper contempt for that great big bugbear "the sun;" and with these requisite qualifications, I have no hesitation in saying that

a day in the Paddy Fields* of the East will yield as good an account of "long-bills" as their brethren "Paddy's Fields" in the bog of Allan; or, for the *dry'un*, as decent a show of hares, partridges, &c. (barring pheasants), as a day's shooting might produce in Old England, provided always you have in your train a suitable pack of black pointers—i. e., nigger-beaters.

But with all this for excitement,—and what is life without it?—give me the "deep jungle" with all its dangers. Then, when you load one barrel with large shot, and drop a bullet into the other; when, bandit-like, you sally forth with the pistol and hunting-knife in your belt, not knowing if you are to stumble on a quail or a quadruped, a pea-fowl or a panther;

* Swampy ground where rice is cultivated, and in which snipe are generally found.

when at the slightest rustling of the underwood, or crackling of the long dry grass under your footsteps, your heart leaps to your mouth and the ready-cocked piece to the shoulder; then, and not till then, can you appreciate the true delights of the chase. Then, if a real sportsman, although an exile in a burning clime, afar from friends, home, and kindred, you will not envy the old governor, or maybe an elder brother, who perhaps at the same moment, attended by John the gamekeeper, a couple of well-trained pointers, and all appliances and means to boot, is comfortably trudging through the stubble, or knocking down pheasants in the coverts like cocks and hens in a barn-yard.

But by the bright looks of Diana! ye sons of Cockaigne! imagine not this to constitute sport! Lay not, deluded wretches, the flattering unction to your souls! But after John has duly given

the census of slaughter, after ye have swallowed, self-satisfied, your bottle of port, and having inserted your tender toes in slippers soft, and deposited your goodly person in snug-arm chair before a blazing fire, take up this volume, and I'll attempt to give you some faint idea of realms in which Nimrod himself might revel.

Like Othello, "rude am I in speech, and little blessed with the set phrase of peace;" therefore, without more preface, I shall say—that in the month of January, 183—, myself and another *compañero* left our snug little bungalow at S——, and by the "light of the moon" took our departure on our trusty nags in a north-easterly direction, in hopes of reaching the hill fort of Boanghir (where our tent awaited us) early in the morning. Our destination was a hitherto unexplored part of the country in the neighbourhood of the Perkhal Lake, a part of the exten-

sive Cummermait Jungle, about a couple of hundred miles distant, where we were to join another party which had already been out several months engaged in the survey of that unknown region.

Boanghir was about thirty miles distant, and we therefore expected to reach it about breakfast-time; but, owing to our mistaking the track, we did not obtain the welcome sight of our tent till near twelve o'clock. We were too much fagged to attempt anything like shooting that day, but in the cool of the evening we scrambled up part of the dark mass of granite on which the fort is constructed, but were stopped midway by a party of Arab soldiers in the Nizam's pay, who composed the garrison of the place. Next morning, and for the following four or five days, we pursued our journey amidst scenery common to this part of India—low jungle, occasionally broken

by a few rice-fields and date-trees, in whose neighbourhood was generally found a small hamlet, near which we always encamped, to have the double advantage of obtaining rice for our followers and buffalo milk for ourselves, our table being otherwise always well supplied with the produce of our guns. We thus journeyed on some eighty or ninety miles, till we reached Hunnumcondah; this appeared the extreme verge of civilization, in the sense of the word in India.

On leaving Hunnumcondah, the "spirit of our dream" suddenly changed: we could no longer overlook the surrounding jungle, but entered at once into a forest land such as I had never before witnessed in India. The teak, the sylvan monarch of the East, now first made its appearance, and as our path wound under its deep foliage, it was no longer crossed by the bounding antelope or timid partridge;

but we would occasionally catch a glimpse of a spotted deer with its spreading antlers, hear the melancholy screech of the peafowl, or have a transient peep at the dazzling plumage of the jungle cock ere he rose and took his pheasant-like flight.

What a pity it is that this noble bird should not be introduced into our coverts at home!—at least, I am not aware of any attempt having been made to do so,—which, as it is a remarkably hardy bird, would probably succeed. The female differs little from the common barn-door fowl, but the plumage of the cock is brilliant beyond measure: the feathers on the back, of a rich yellow orange colour, are different from those of any other bird in one remarkable peculiarity, the end of each feather having the appearance and consistency of card or pasteboard, coloured and highly varnished, which, overlapping each other, produce the most splendid

effect. It is a very shy bird, and difficult to put up, but runs along amidst the underwood with wonderful quickness, and can carry away a good charge of shot.

As we proceeded, the forest scenery by degrees grew bolder, whilst the track of larger animals often seen in the sand—amongst which we distinctly perceived that of the tiger—reminded us that we were entering domains where the sway of man was little known, and warned us to keep close together during the remainder of the day's march, which ended at a place called Gheezcondah, composed of a few straggling huts by the side of a tank, and occupied by wood-cutters.

Our first care on reaching our encamping ground was always (having first duly breakfasted) to send for the Potail, or head man of the village, and inquire what game there was in the neighbourhood. On the present occasion, this important

personage gave us wonderful accounts of the *sheekar* (shooting) to be had in the vicinity; amongst other things, he said that a wild buffalo sometimes came to the tank, and that on a neighbouring hill (which he pointed out from the door of the tent) there were no less than seven tigers.

We gave the old fellow full credit for laying it on *rayther* too thick, but resolved in the evening to reconnoitre the hill. On our way there, we banged two or three times at hares and spur fowl with our *shot* barrels, always taking the precaution of keeping one loaded with ball. We thus sauntered carelessly along, until, as we approached the rock, an object attracted our attention which put us on the *qui vive*: it was the carcass of a sheep nearly devoured, and that recently. This smelt rather *tigerish*, particularly as the underwood at the foot of the rock was extremely

thick and tangled, affording likely covert for a beast of prey; we therefore proceeded cautiously. Nothing, however, particularly fixed our attention until we had nearly reached the summit: here, on a ledge of granite overlooking a chasm many feet in depth, and in front of an aperture in the rock, we saw a quantity of tiger's hair, as if he had been in the habit of basking there in the sun. We resolved, therefore, to lay in ambush immediately above the fissure, which we supposed to be his den, and patiently await until he should emerge, when we might get a shot at him within a few feet, and before he could be aware of our presence.

But in this world the best concerted plans are liable to be frustrated. We had not been ten minutes in our position, when, instead of coming, as we expected, from under our feet, and allowing us to take him in the rear, a slight rustling in

the bushes immediately in front of us was followed by a noble royal tiger advancing most majestically along the ledge of rock: at first, he did not perceive us, and we allowed him to approach a few paces: he then looked up, viewed us, and made a dead stop. Not a second was to be lost; he was within twelve yards, and a single bound would have sent at least one of the party to eternity. We both fired instantaneously, and both with effect: he reared himself up on his hind legs, as if to make a forward bound, fell back, and rolled headlong into the abyss below. My ball had hit him between the eyes; G——'s had struck him in the loins.

I know not how *he* found himself; but I must confess that, although my hand was steady enough when I fired, after the business was over, and I was again proceeding to load, it felt *unkinmon* tremulous, much as if I had had a glass "de

trop" over night. As to the poor devil of a black fellow who had accompanied us, he was a perfect chameleon, his polished black phiz being transmogrified into an ashy blue.

By our log we now made ourselves out somewhere about twenty miles from our surveying friends, and stopped a day at Gheezcondah to await the arrival of a messenger we had despatched in search of them, and were much rejoiced to hear, on his return, that we were right in our calculations, and that a couple of horses would be posted for us next day midway between Scevaporam, a small village, where they had been some time expecting us.

Accordingly, "flaky darkness had scarce broken in the East," when we were mounted and *chulling* along at a rate our nags had latterly not been accustomed to, leaving our people to follow at their lei-

sure. We found a couple of strong ponies at the appointed place, and having our own spurs and friends' nags did not in the least tend to slacken the pace, which, about 9 A.M., brought us in the presence of a very respectable encampment, in the midst of which was conspicuous, the noble double-poled tent of my friend M——.

He and his assistant, D——, came out to give us an Indian welcome: they were both right *good 'uns*, but at present rather *rum 'uns* to look at. D——, with a beard reaching down to his waist, reminded me so strongly of Robinson Crusoe, that I could not help roaring outright, whilst M—— only required a slight dash of Day and Martin to personate a very respectable Friday. We were ushered in to a capital breakfast, whilst discussing which, our wild men of the woods related to us all the adventures and hair-breadth 'scapes by field and flood they had en-

countered during the four months of their jungle exile, and concluded with the joyful intelligence that a wild buffalo had been seen within a few miles, and that scouts were then on the look-out to bring the earliest intelligence of him. He had been described to them as a most formidable monster, having killed or disabled several natives in charge of herds of tame buffaloes, the males of which he also attacked, and drove the females into the wood. Several unsuccessful attempts had been made to destroy him, in the course of which he had received many matchlock balls in different parts of his body, but at the end of a few weeks always returned as troublesome and fierce as ever.

This, as may be imagined, stirred up our mettle, and the day was passed in anxious expectation of the return of the sheekarees (native hunters): we heard

nothing of them, however, till next morning at breakfast, when as primitive a Nimrod as ever I beheld, except that he carried a long rusty matchlock instead of a bow and arrows, came in breathless haste to announce that he had tracked our great enemy into a large *meidan* (plain) distant about four miles in the depth of the forest.

We were soon under arms, and about an hour brought us to the scene of action. This was a plain of about a square mile in extent, and covered with long dry grass, reaching in many places as high as our saddles, whilst in others it lay in prostrate flakes on the ground: the whole was surrounded by very high jungle and forest trees. We were not long in discovering our foe, who stood in apparent security near the middle of the meidan, and settled our plan of attack as follows:—As he was known invariably to charge after being

fired at, and often before, it was agreed that one of us, mounted and spear in hand, should take off his attention, whilst the rest advanced under cover of some bushes until within shot, the said horseman likewise covering the *retrate* in the event of the Joe Mantons and Eggs not doing their duty.

I know not why—probably from being so fortunate as to possess a greater resemblance to that far-famed worthy Don Quixote than any of the rest of the party—I was selected to enact the cavalry on this occasion. Accordingly, making a *detour*, and skirting the wood whilst the skirmishers advanced as before agreed on, I was soon within fifty or sixty yards of the enemy, and *then* I began to be aware of the sort of *cratur* we had to deal with; he stood as high as the largest English ox, with much greater breadth; but the most imposing part of him was his head

ornaments—such horns! I am ashamed to make a guess at their size! but, husbands, ye might have envied him! *I* only thought of the lift they might perchance give me and my nag, should a false step or other accident put us within their reach.

The noble animal appeared astonished at my audacity in daring to approach him; and as I quietly rode round him, merely changed his position to eye me with unconcealed surprise. The infantry had by this time approached within range, probably about eighty yards, and I moved out of their line of fire, having so far effected my object in warding off his attention from their advance.

There was now a moment of anxious suspense, as I could see M.'s rifle slowly brought to his shoulder: he fired; the shot evidently told, and, from the manner in which the brute momentarily staggered,

I should think between the horns; be that as it may, his fire was immediately followed by four other discharges, in spite of which he manfully kept his legs. I expected that he would now go at them tail on end, according to custom, but whether he had had a sickener, or was intimidated by this new mode of attack, I know not; however, he went to the right about, and started off as hard as his legs could carry him, myself in his wake, thinking I could soon bring him up. In this I was, however, slightly mistaken; for although mounted on a good little bit of Arab stuff, and not sparing the *Brummagems*, I found I overhauled him but slowly, and it was not until he reached the opposite verge of the jungle that I succeeded in giving him one poke in the stern; but I might as well have directed my spear against the oaken one of a seventy-four. It only tended to accelerate his speed;

and the manner in which he crushed through and bore down the tall jungle and small trees, which afterwards rebounded with violence, warned me that all further pursuit would be of no avail. I therefore pulled up, and, rejoining the party, we all retraced our steps to Seevaporam, lamenting our ill success, but with the valiant resolution of concluding our day's sport by astonishing a few of the snipe and wild fowl in the rice-fields and tanks near the encampment.

CHAPTER IX.

DEEP JUNGLE SHOOTING — THE SPIRIT OF THE LAKE — THE AMBUSH — WINGING A LITTLE GRUNTER — DISAPPOINTMENT — THE SPORTSMEN'S BANQUET — STORY OF THE HOOKAH-BURDAR.

"A wreath of the mist, a bubble of the stream,
'Twixt a waking thought and a sleeping dream."

Scott.

We jogged back from the scene of our discomfiture in the silence of disappointment, only occasionally interrupted by expressions of regret at having missed such a quarry, which had so unexpectedly slipped through our fingers, when everything seemed to promise its immediate capture, and we had already in anticipation divided the spoils. Our melancholy

meditations were, however, interrupted by a herd of spotted deer suddenly dashing across the path, the last glimpse of whose antlers had long disappeared ere our horsekeepers came up with our fowling-pieces; *they* had likewise been discussing the results of the forenoon's adventure, and were straggling along as carelessly as ourselves, for which be it said, *en passant*, they received not a few blessings. "By Jove!" cried I, "we may yet have a chance of redeeming our character; and though a buck's antlers be not so good a frontispiece as the buff's horns, they are not to be sneezed at. Let us send home our nags and get on their trail."

My proposal was, however, very coolly received; our late disappointment had evidently shaken for the time the sporting enthusiasm of the party, and appeared to have *chased* the *chaste* Diana from their thoughts. I left them, therefore, in none

of the best of tempers, and, taking with me the faithful Chennoo, commenced, alone and on foot, the pursuit.

The herd was a large one, and I was the more easily able to trace their flight, which led me insensibly into the depths of the forest. At last I got a view of them in a somewhat open space: a clump of bamboo was within range of the nearest, and under its friendly screen I made almost sure of getting a shot; but, alas! my expectations were vain. Before I could get within point blank they were off again, and in pursuing this *ignis fatuus* my toil appeared to have no end; at one moment creeping on all fours amidst the long grass, at another sneaking up behind the trunk of a gigantic teak, but my efforts always ending in disappointment and vexation of spirit.

Travelling on in this manner like a Cherokee Indian on the *trail* of a foe, I at

last reached the banks of a nullah, whose sandy bed was still moist with recently dried up waters, and bore traces which instantly diverted me from my former pursuit. Its banks were thickly overhung by the graceful bamboo and fan-like leaves of the wild turmeric, which shot up amongst larger trees, interlaced with a verdant canopy of lianas and creepers of the most beautiful description; but these, though no doubt possessing unrivalled charms to the botanist, were not the attraction which riveted me to the spot. On the smooth surface of the soft damp sand I saw distinct impressions, "clear and damning proofs," of nearly the size of a dessert plate, of its having been visited, and that recently, by a royal tiger of the largest description. Neither did it escape Chennoo's experienced eye: a whispered "Dekho, Sahib!" (Look, Sir!) as he pointed with his spear-head, proved him likewise to be

wide awake to the circumstance. We followed the traces cautiously and in silence for some distance along the bed of the nullah, till they disappeared in the adjacent jungle. In the meantime we crossed several tracks of wild-hog and pea-fowl, and I felt convinced that, by laying in wait beside some pool in the watercourse, if such were to be found, my patience would be rewarded by a shot at something or other, led thither to quench its thirst. I was the more strongly confirmed in this idea as I felt not at all indisposed myself to a sip of cool water.

"Journeying with this intent," I at last discovered water "a-head:" it was a clear pool, under the overhanging banks of the nullah, and moreover kept fresh by the shade of a huge teak, whose gnarled and knotted roots were fed by it, with what effect was evident by the verdant foliage waving aloft. It was just the spot for an

ambush, and behind the giant trunk I took up my post, and patiently awaited the result. And long and patiently did I wait; but time on such occasions always flies lazily on leaden wings. At last I was aroused by a slight touch from Chennoo, who pointed out a flock of pea-fowl running in the long grass about a hundred yards up the bank of the nullah. I began to be heartily tired of watching, and gladly seized an excuse to quit my post, and endeavour to steal a march on my glittering foes. This was, however, easier attempted than accomplished; and the difficulty I experienced made me give credit to friend Ovid for the veracity of his *tale*, when he transfers the eyes of Argus to *that* of the bird—

"Excipit hos, volucrisque suæ Saturnia pennis
Collocat; et gemmis caudam stellantibus implet:"

for useless were all my endeavours to approach them, when, having taken me a

considerable distance up the nullah, my ears were suddenly saluted by a most unmusical grunt, proceeding from a monster,

"Whose eye-balls glare with fire suffused with blood,
Whose neck shoots up a thick-set thorny wood,
Whose bristled back a trench impaled appears,
And stands erected like a field of spears.
Froth fills his chaps, he sends a grunting sound,
And part he churns, and part befoams the ground;
For tusks with Indian elephants he strove,
And Jove's own thunder from his mouth he drove:" (DRYDEN'S *Ovid.*)

or, in plain prose, from a matronly sow, whose maternal care was engaged in the education of a numerous progeny of fine young grunters, whom I thus unceremoniously intruded on during their afternoon's repast. "Sharp's the word, and quick's the motion," in jungle-shooting: bang went the *ball* barrel, and *missed* the old lady: a charge of shot in the fore-leg of one of the juveniles laid him sprawling,

followed by my pistol snapping, and myself scrambling up the bank, all in "a stroke of tragic lightning." Woful was my disappointment, on recovering *my* legs, to see the little squeaker galloping off on three scrapers with such speed that he soon disappeared with his family circle in the long grass, which here rose as high as my shoulder, and through which I for some time tracked him by the "gouts of blood," but at last gave up the pursuit in despair, as I felt convinced it was my "nusseeb" (fate) to be on that day unfortunate. Moreover, the lengthening shadows warned me that Phœbus was going down hill; and never using a drag in this part of the world, he speeds at an awful pace towards the latter end of the descent, and disappears altogether with little or no warning. Whilst, therefore, he held the ribbons, Chennoo and I took him for our guide, and with very imperfect notions of our

latitude and longitude, or distance from camp, we put our best foot foremost in a westerly direction.

"*Fortuna favet fortibus:*" we had steered the right course, and an hour and a half of brisk walking brought us within sight of the camp, just as the sun was dipping behind the tall trees which formed the back-ground of the picture—and a beautiful soft picture it was, well worthy of the pencil of Claude Loraine. The white tents, thrown out in strong relief on the dark foliage of the forest, were pitched on a piece of open green sward, gently sloping towards a small but clear and deep sheet of water, in whose placid bosom was reflected the tranquil scene around, but broken here and there by a partial carpeting of the broad-leafed lotus, along whose wavy surface skimmed with fairy flight the beautiful bird which bears its name. So graceful is the flower of this plant, that the Hindoos

make it give birth to Camdeo, the God of Love, who was first seen to

"Down the blue Ganges, laughing, glide,
Upon a rosy Lotus wreath,
Catching new lustre from the tide
That with his image shone beneath."

MOORE.

Nor are classical illustrations wanting to enhance the renown of the water-lily of Hindostan, which Ovid has immortalized in his story of Dryope and Lotis—

"Scilicet ut referunt tardi nunc denique agrestes.
Lotis in hanc Nymphe, fugiens obscœna Priapi,
Contulerat versos servato nomine vultus."

And poor Dryope was condemned to the same fate for inadvertently plucking one of the flowers over which the spirit of the unfortunate nymph undoubtedly flits to the present day under the graceful shape and brilliant plumage of the lotus bird.

But *we* are flitting into the regions of fiction; let us return to sober prose, and

say a word or two of the bird itself. In shape, it is a pheasant in miniature, but, if possible, with much more splendid plumage, which changes to every tint of the rainbow as it lightly runs along the surface of the broad lotus leaf, and the bright feathers catch the reflected rays of the sun. It is enabled to support its slight weight on this frail tenure by the rapidity of its motions and peculiar shape of the feet, which, although not webbed, have toes of such unusual length that they cover a very large space, and, like a skilful skaiter, it glides with ease over a surface apparently inadequate to its support.

In admiration of the classic and pictures*kew*, I was detained so long on the banks of this fairy little lake, that the short twilight of a tropical evening was well nigh passed, and a most unromantic sense of hunger urged me towards the tents. On my approach, delightful signs

of a good dinner met my view, and my olfactories were saluted by smells the most grateful to a hungry sportsman. On entering the dinner-tent, I found the whole party already seated. Ten or twelve couple of snipe had crowned their labours, and, after standing a few volleys of their wit at my own failures, I repaired to my tent, where a few *chatties* (earthen jars) of cold water poured over me by the *maty* (servant-boy), with the addition of a clean shirt and long drawers, completed my toilette for dinner, to which I was shortly summoned.

Ye epicures at home! ye turtle-fed aldermen! turn not up your noses at our sportsman's fare in the sunny land of Ind—particularly with a host like our friend M——: we were his guests, and amply did he provide for our wants. Though lacking of turtle-soup, and turbot, and the lordly sirloin, still could we boast

of our *mullagatawney*, our boiled *humps*, our leg of mutton, our oversaid ten or twelve couple of the finest snipe, and—I had almost forgotten it—our never-failing curry! for what would an Indian do without his curry and rice? And, what was more, we had all both the appetite and the will to make a great big hole in all these good things, which were duly washed down with Hodgson's pale ale and rosy claret, saltpetred to the coolness of the virgin snows of the Himalaya.

"All this is very fine!" I think I hear the gruff old gentleman in slippers exclaim (whom the reader may remember having left, sipping his port in an easy arm-chair):—"all this is very good! very good traveller's tales!" says he, putting down the book to replenish his glass; "but pray, young man, have you got railroads and canals through your jungle-land to carry about so easily all

these good things?"—Neither, you surly old unbeliever! But were I to take the trouble to explain to you that four European sportsmen had in their train upwards of a hundred followers to administer to their wants; could I, moreover, make you comprehend the use and meaning of *coolies*, *doolies*, *courie baskets*, and *bullock* trunks, Lascars and Aubdars, your old pudding face would not look so sceptical, and you might form an idea how we managed to sip our cool claret in the midst of the wilderness.—"By the piper who played before Moses!" we not only carried with us all these good things, also our houses—canvass ones, 'tis true,—but we had likewise provided against accidents by flood as well as field in the shape of a boat made of cane-work, and covered with skins, which M— had constructed for the navigation of the Perkhal Lake, which was carried on a bullock-cart, and yclept "the Black Joke."

But the scepticism of the old gentleman in slippers has put me off the "drag" of my story; let us therefore hark back. Where was I? Oh! washing down heaps of Kabaub curry with buckets full of *pāle!** That finished, and the cloth removed, every man made himself comfortable with a Trichinopoly cheroot in his cheek, except M—, who sported a hookah, the peculiar charge of old Cassim.

Now Cassim was, generally speaking, a fine jovial old fellow, with a smile and a joke ready for every one; but on the present occasion we could not help remarking how much he appeared out of sorts, as he stood behind his master's chair with folded arms and a most rueful expression of countenance. On inquiring what ailed him, we could at first elicit no more than a "kooch nay," (nothing:)

* Hodgson's pale ale, a common and favourite beverage in India.

however, on being further pressed, he at last said, "Sahib is going to the burree talab (great lake), and means in the boat to venture on its waters. I would represent that it is said to be a bad place, haunted by *sheitans* (devils), but there is, they say, one *Jinn* (spirit) in particular, residing at an old ruined pagoda on its banks, of so malignant a nature that it casts an evil eye on any one approaching its residence, or venturing on the waters of the lake, and that its visitations are invariably followed by lingering sickness and death."

"Nonsense!" we all exclaimed; "where the deuce did you pick up all this trash?"

"If the gentlemen would condescend to listen," replied Cassim, "I will relate what I have heard from all the village people regarding this lake." A nod of assent encouraged him to proceed.

"It is said that many, many years ago the banks of the lake were covered with

populous villages and fertile rice-fields, where at present nothing is to be found but impenetrable forests and wild animals. The cause of this great change is as follows:—Near one of the villages was a pagoda, one of the officiating Brahmins of which had a wife *bhot khoobsourut* (extremely handsome), and an only child. In a fit of jealousy he stabbed the latter and threw it into the lake: the frantic mother, in her despair, precipitated herself into the waters, and was never seen again. Shortly after this, the form of a woman, shrouded in mist, and carrying the bloody corpse of a child in her arms, was frequently seen gliding along the surface of the lake: but it was remarked that whoever beheld the fearful vision invariably sickened and died. This at last happened so often that the neighbouring country was gradually deserted, and became the uninhabited wilderness it is at present."

Cassim here ceased, fancying no doubt he had produced a great sensation on his listeners: his story, however, only increased our mirth, and the poor old fellow appeared well pleased to get his *rokhsut* (leave) to retire.*

"That old proser, with his mists, has made me feel quite cold," said D—. "By-the-bye, I would wager a trifle we are at this moment surrounded by one of those confounded jungle fogs. What say you, lads, to some mulled port to keep out the malaria?" Now, although perhaps the only fog was a tobacco one, dense enough to have routed a Walcheren fever, mulled port and spice were voted the order of the day, or rather "night,"

* A native never leaves the presence of a superior without having obtained permission to do so. This is granted with a slight wave of the hand and inclination of the head, accompanied by the words: "Rokhsut hy," "You have leave."

and to it we sat in right good earnest, the topic of conversation being, as may be supposed, the "Spirit of the Lake," and the anticipated sport we should have in stemming its waters in "the Black Joke," shooting alligators, and chasing the mystical lady on her own domains. "After all," said M—, "instead of the *spirit*, we may perhaps encounter some dusky *Lady of the Lake*. The only question is, who will be *Snowdon's Knight* to the dark *Ellen?* But I begin to feel a little drunk and monstrous sleepy, and only wish she would make her appearance at this moment and lull me with her—

"'Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumb'rous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillée.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For, at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillée.'

"And now, my lads, 'tis time to turn in; *our* chase is not done, and we must be up to-morrow with the lark; so *bon soir!*"

END OF VOL. I.

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